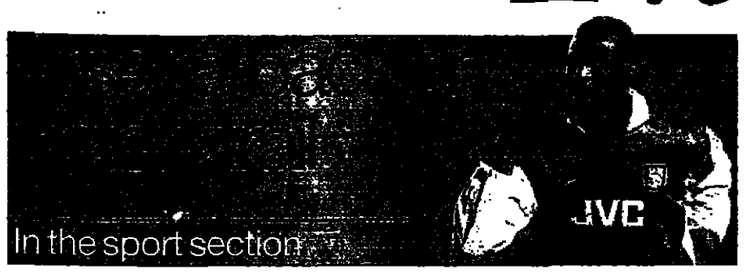
Monday
December 21 1998
Britain's newspaper for Europe

The Guardian EUROPE



In the sport section


James Hewitt in G2

In the G2 Media pages

Blair promises to keep Saddam 'in his cage' as doubts grow over Iraq attacks

'We may strike again'

David Sharrock in Baghdad, Richard Norton-Taylor and Ian Black

BRITAIN and the United States yesterday reserved the right to launch fresh attacks on Iraq as the two governments struggled to win wider international support for a new policy of containment.

Ordering the aircraft carrier HMS Invincible to the Gulf, Tony Blair insisted that if Britain and the US had not taken action this time to keep Saddam Hussein "in his cage" their credibility would have been "reduced to zero".

With unconfirmed reports of thousands of Iraqis killed and injured in Operation Desert Fox and doubts about how much damage had been done to the country's military machine, the Iraqi leader claimed that his country had been victorious over the "enemies of God".

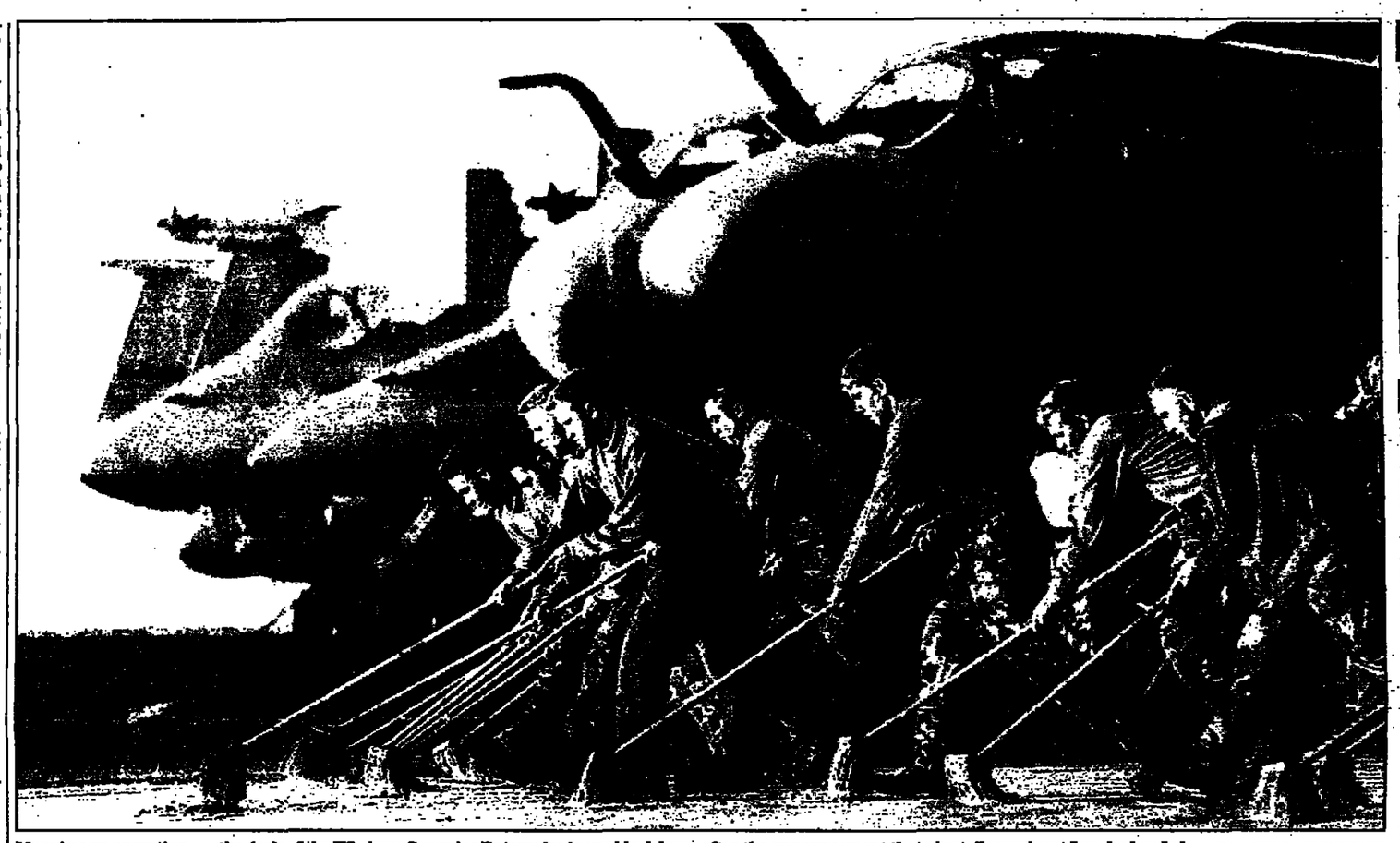
Asked what would trigger action against Iraq in the future, Mr Blair said: "If he [Saddam] poses any threat to the outside world, we will act again." But he acknowledged there was no guarantee that Saddam could be removed.

In halting the strikes, President Clinton said the 70-hour assault had severely damaged Iraq's ability to build weapons of mass destruction.

"We consider this a very successful attack at this point," said the chairman of the US joint chiefs of staff, General Henry Shelton. "Our success goes up almost daily as we have a chance to make a more complete assessment."

But the inspectors of the United Nations Special Commission (Unscom), charged with monitoring and destroying Iraq's banned chemical and biological arsenal, seem unlikely to be allowed to resume work. Iraq's vice-president, Taha Yassin Ramadan, declared that Unscom's mission was over.

Madeleine Albright, the US secretary of state, said: "The inspectors have not been able to do their job for the last eight months. We have other means of monitoring, and we reserve the right to use force."


Mopping-up operation . . . the deck of the US aircraft carrier Enterprise is swabbed down after the announcement that air strikes against Iraq had ended PHOTOGRAPH: KEVIN COOMES

William Cohen, the US defence secretary, said: "We are going to be in the region, we are going to maintain our military capability, we are going to continue the sanctions and watch to make sure that he doesn't pose a threat to his neighbours or try to reconstitute these programmes."

Nizar Hamdoun, Iraq's ambassador to the UN, said the allied attacks had killed or wounded thousands of people. Previous reports indicated that at least 42 people had been killed and 96 wounded.

Intensive diplomatic activity is now expected to build international support for a new policy of containment, with Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary, planning to speak to his European Union colleagues today to try to mend fences after resentment over the fact that only Britain acted with the US.

Russia said yesterday that the US and Britain had finally shown common sense by halting the attacks while fellow UN Security Council members France and China urged new efforts to solve the crisis.

Moscow has been incensed that Washington and London disregarded its views over Iraq and bypassed the Security Council, where Russia has the right of veto as one of five permanent members.

In Paris, President Jacques Chirac called for a review of an eight-year-old international oil embargo on Baghdad, saying living conditions in Iraq had to be improved urgently.

China called for renewed diplomatic efforts to resolve the dispute between Unscom and Iraq that triggered the air attacks.

Mr Blair said Invincible would arrive in the Gulf in January, after Ramadan, the Muslim holy month of fasting. George Robertson, the Defence Secretary, described the move as a "very big signal" to Saddam.

The Prime Minister dismissed suggestions that the timing of Operation Desert Fox had been linked to President Clinton's impeachment as "grotesque and offensive".

In Baghdad, the end of the bombing was met with relief by ordinary people. In his second pre-recorded television message in three days, Saddam, dressed in military uniform, said the air strikes had rekindled the spirit of resistance apparent during the "Mother of all Battles" — the 1991 Gulf war.

"God wanted it to be an honour, dignity and glory for you in these days and in the day of judgment," he said. "God will make it a disgrace, dishonour and a great crime in these days and in the day of judgment to those enemies of God and humanity who committed it."

Under UN resolutions, the economic sanctions imposed after Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait cannot be lifted until Unscom certifies that Iraq is free of all nuclear, chemical and biological weapons and long-range missiles. How that is to be done without Unscom remains unanswered.

The Pentagon said 425 Tomahawk cruise missiles were fired during the campaign — more than the number fired in the entire five-week Gulf war to evict Iraq from Kuwait. Iraq says its gunners shot down more than 100 Tomahawks. The offensive involved 650 aircraft missions, including 32 sorties by 12 RAF Tornado fighter-bombers.

When Mr Clinton called off the attack, it apparently caught the British by surprise. Four Tornados on their way to Iraq to bomb Republican Guard positions had to be recalled.



On other pages

- Ian Black analyses the success of Operation Desert Fox, page 2
- David Sharrock in Baghdad on prayers for a peaceful Christmas, page 3
- Martin Kettle on how the Senate will conduct the trial of a president; Jonathan Freedland on a dramatic day in Congress, page 4
- Michael Ellison reports on the mood in Arkansas, page 4
- Top columnists assess impeachment and the bombing of Iraq: Comment, here Jonathan Freedland, Barbara Ehrenreich, Peter Preston and Ronald Steel, page 8
- Leader comment and Letters, page 9
- Maggie O'Kane on the hidden legacy of the Gulf war, G2 cover story

Clinton aides seek last-minute deal

White House in secret talks with Republicans to head off trial

Martin Kettle and Julian Borger in Washington

THE White House launched a behind-the-scenes drive to save Bill Clinton's presidency yesterday, less than 24 hours after he became the first American president in 130 years to face a Senate impeachment trial.

Mr Clinton's advisers have begun secret consultations with Senate Republicans on possible compromise deals, in which the president would be censured and perhaps fined, thus avoiding a trial which some experts say could last for up to six months.

The Northern Ireland peacemaker Senator George Mitchell, a former Senate majority leader, is expected to be called in to spearhead the attempt to strike a deal.

Mr Clinton said on Saturday that he intended to fight to remain in the White House until "the last hour of the last day of my term" and to resist calls to resign in favour of Vice-President Al Gore.

As the president took his daughter, Chelsea, to church yesterday, the White House chief of staff, John Podesta, said Mr Clinton would not step down.

"I think if the president were to resign under these circumstances, it would weaken the presidency, it would weaken the constitution, it would undermine the process the Founding Fathers put in place. It would be a bad thing for America," Mr Podesta said.

As Washington drew breath yesterday after four days of tumultuous political crisis amid the now suspended US assault on Iraq, opinion polls showed continued strong ratings for Mr Clinton but a rise in those who want him to resign and bring the constitutional standoff to an end.

An NBC poll taken on Saturday showed Mr Clinton's support rose from 68 per cent to 72 per cent after the House of Representatives passed two articles of impeachment. Sixty-two per cent said he should serve out his term — up 11 per cent from a survey on Tuesday.


President Clinton leaves church in Washington yesterday with his daughter Chelsea PHOTOGRAPH: WILLIAM PHILPOTT

But a Newsweek magazine poll showed a rise to 44 per cent of those wanting Mr Clinton to resign. Other polls showed fewer people backing resignation. This is one indicator the White House is watching closely, anxious to prevent calls for the president to step down from snowballing within the apparently still loyal Democratic Party.

There were early hints that some Republicans shared the White House aim of averting a long and humiliating trial which would lock up Congress, presidency and supreme court business.

"There has to be some consideration to what you do that is the best under the circumstances to resolve this matter in the best interests of the country," Orrin Hatch, the Senate judiciary committee chairman and a senior Republican, said yesterday.

Mr Hatch called on the Senate majority leader, Trent Lott, to conduct a private straw poll of senators to see whether Mr Clinton is likely to be convicted.

Mr Lott is personally in favour of convicting Mr Clinton, but the White House believes that his statement leaves room for the Senate to vote to end the trial. "The timing will depend greatly on the president and his lawyers," Mr Lott said after the House vote.

The two articles of impeachment cover perjury in the president's August 17 testimony to the federal grand jury investigating the Monica Lewinsky affair, and obstruction of justice.

The message from the White House, however, is that the president's men are up for a deal on Capitol Hill along the lines of the bipartisan "censure plus" motion proposed last week by the former Republican presidential candidate Bob Dole.

"The lawyers are beginning to look toward the next stage," a White House official said yesterday. "We believe some bipartisan solution can and should be found."

The events in the House on Saturday left the Republican Party stunned at the loss of its second Speaker in less than two months. The shock resignation of the Speaker-elect, Bob Livingston, only weeks after he forced his predecessor Newt Gingrich to quit, left the Illinois congressman Dennis Hastert as the front-runner for the post.

Meanwhile, Larry Flynt, the publisher whose investigations into congressional sex lives forced Mr Livingston to give up the post of Speaker, has threatened to release details on up to a dozen other Republicans before Congress reconvenes in January.



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Inside

UK news
The poor are paying more than the better off this Christmas for a selection of seasonal goods, a consumers' survey reveals today. **Page 5**

International
Fans of bullfighting were yesterday mourning Antonio Ordonez, one of the great matadors of the 20th century. **Page 6**

Our e-mail address for editorial comments is geurope@guardian.co.uk

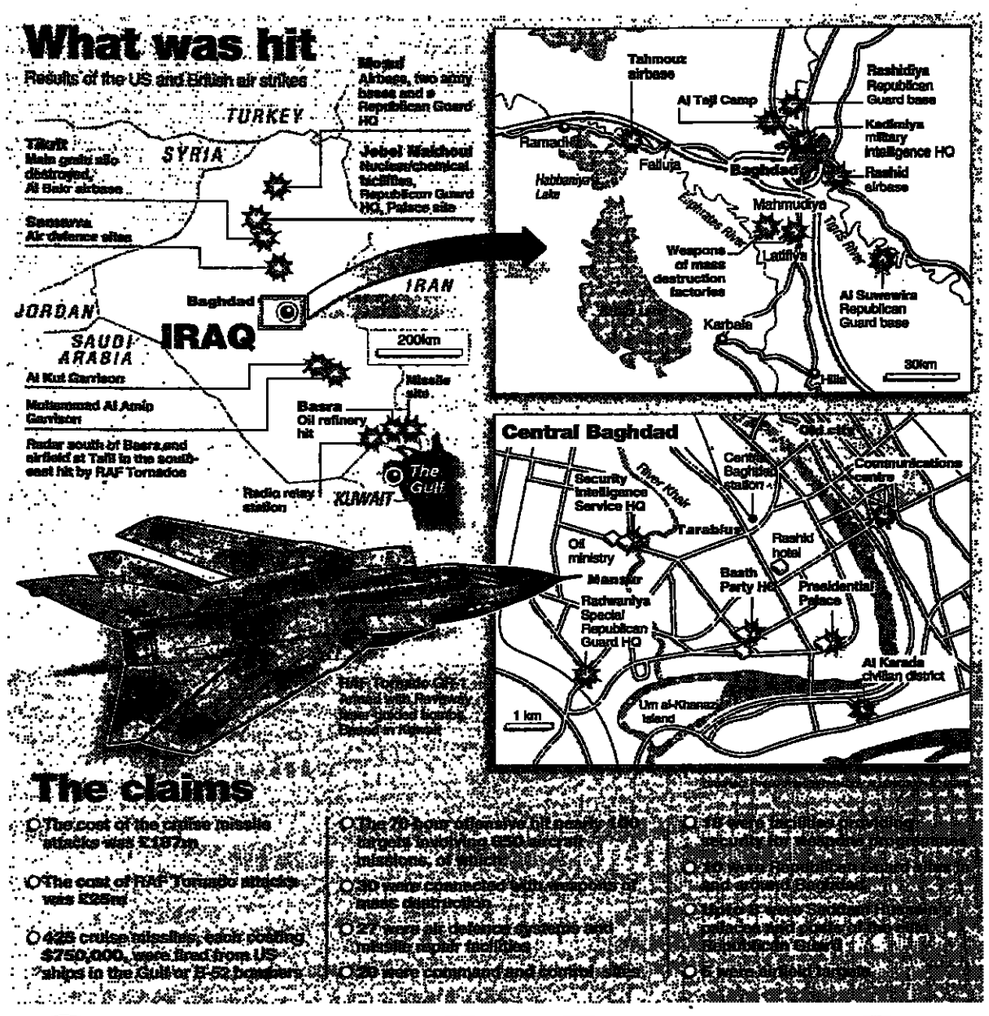
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Belgium BF 70	Greece D 500	Malta ML 0.50	Slovenia SLT 290
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Canada C$ 3.95	Hungary F 300	Netherlands G 4.25	Sweden SK 17
Croatia KN 15.00	Iceland IK 185	Norway NK 18	Switzerland SF 3.50
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Iraq: After the missiles

The international determination to keep Saddam 'in his cage' is looking shakier than ever







A Tornado pilot displays the campaign's fox insignia. Yesterday pilots felt relief that it was over PHOTOGRAPH: STEPHANIE McGEHEE

Caged, but for how long?

GOALS: The US and Britain claimed success, but questions remain about how to 'contain' Saddam and how much he is damaged, writes **Ian Black**

AS Britain and America claimed success for the military goals of Operation Desert Fox yesterday and set out a new strategy of "containment" for Iraq, many tough questions remained unanswered.

The first is how will Saddam Hussein, still alive and as vocal as ever, be contained? There are echoes here of earlier attempts at containment — it has, after all, been the declared goal of the US and Britain since the Gulf war ended inconclusively in March 1991 with the liberation of Kuwait but with the Iraqi dictator, shaken by bloody rebellions of Kurds and Shi'ites, still in power.

The key differences now are that the inspectors of the United Nations Special Commission (Unscom) — condemned as spies by Baghdad — are highly unlikely to go back; and that international determination to keep Saddam "in his cage" is looking shakier than ever before.

New means will have to be found to monitor what remains of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction, though aerial and satellite surveillance is unlikely to be more effective than an on-the-ground hunt for incriminating procurement documents and easily concealed flasks of germ warfare agents.

How extensively Saddam's regime and capabilities have been damaged is another important question: even extensive damage could leave the Iraqi leader able within months — and perhaps weeks — of again threatening his neighbours with chemical and biological weapons.

And despite intensive targeting of his elite security units and unconfirmed reports of summary executions of mutinous officers, it does not automatically translate into a significant weakening of what Tony Blair called this "highly centralised and repressive regime".

The Anglo-American camp will now have to seek support for maintaining the UN sanctions imposed in 1990. Russia and France, furious at not being consulted about Desert Fox and opposed to any military action, have long been working to ease those sanctions and at the very least to show Baghdad "some light at the end of the tunnel". It will clearly not be easy to persuade them to sign up to tighter enforcement.

Boris Yeltsin, the Russian president, gave a clear sign of his mood yesterday when he insisted it was "absolutely clear that the use of force has only complicated solving the Iraq problem."

And in Paris, Jacques Chirac called for a review of the eight-year oil embargo, which has starved and impoverished millions of ordinary Iraqis while a brutal regime has creamed off UN-approved sales to live in luxury.

Attitudes like these will take some overcoming, as Michael Howard, the shadow foreign secretary, argued yesterday in responding to Mr Blair's presentation.

"He called for a more intensive enforcement of sanctions but how is that any easier today than it was a week ago?" Mr Howard asked. "He spoke of a new diplomatic consensus, but the absence of that consensus over the last few days does not bode well for the future."

Faced with this reality, diplomatic activity will be intense in the coming days. Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary, started with a call to Madeleine Albright, his American counterpart — reeling from the Clinton impeachment drama but also claiming success in keeping Saddam "in his box". More strikingly, Mr Cook spoke too to Kamal Kharrazi, Iran's foreign minister and chairman of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference.

Iran has spoken out forcefully against unilateral American-British action, but its hostility to Iraq (despite covert cooperation in sanctions-busting) and regional influence could be useful in trying to unite Muslim and Arab states behind containment.

Securing agreement for more sales of oil to buy humanitarian supplies and relieve the suffering of the Iraqi people will be a key part of this diplomatic campaign.

After angry demonstrations from Morocco to Syria and charges of double standards in the light of renewed stalemate in the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, threats of anti-western terrorist attacks will have to be taken seriously.

US and British diplomats say that whatever their public stance, Arab Gulf states privately want a tough policy towards Baghdad. But it seems unlikely that their support will be any more forthcoming if the US and Britain again insist that UN resolutions allow them to attack without warning.

Russia's call for a return to the security council suggests a long haul to achieve consensus even among the veto-wielding Big Five after their failure to consult last week following the damning report on Iraqi obstruction by Unscom chief Richard Butler.

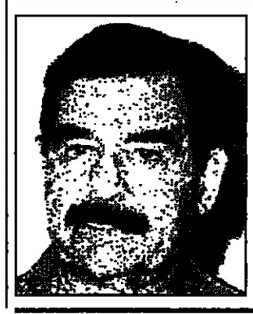
Yesterday's statements in Washington and London emphasised support for the Iraqi opposition, but in neither capital was there the explicit backing for a long-term, comprehensive strategy of regime destabilisation that exile groups are demanding.

Conscripts in the Iraqi army will have noticed that they were not bombed while Republican Guard units were. But there is no sign that the US and Britain are ready to pay the diplomatic and military price of enforcing a "no-drive" zone that would restrict Iraqi armour to the Baghdad area — and encourage insurrection elsewhere.

"There will be a deepening problem in the Arab world if our campaign does not end in a significantly chastened and punished regime in Baghdad," warned Robert Satloff, of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy.

"We have no doctrine, no ground rules," said security expert Anthony Cordesman. "We have not set out what we're doing beyond degrade, we haven't defined what success is. One of our problems is that we're so self-obsessed that we have not dealt with the rest of the world."

Desert Fox is over, but the story of containing Iraq continues. Whatever else happens in the coming months, it is a fair bet that Saturday night will not be the last time air raid sirens are heard wailing in the streets of Baghdad.



Even extensive damage could leave Saddam able within weeks of threatening his neighbours with chemical weapons

Key questions still unanswered

THE RAIDS: Britain and US hail success, but remain vague about how much damage done to Saddam's war machine, says **Richard Norton-Taylor**

BRITISH and US officials yesterday hailed four nights of air strikes by more than 400 cruise missiles and 200 bombers on nearly 100 targets as a success, but were vague about the extent of the damage caused by the massive military action.

Two key questions about Operation Desert Fox remained last night after a string of ministerial press conferences and interviews: how much damage was done to Saddam's war machine and ability to maintain internal repression, and how quickly can he repair it?

William Cohen, the US defence secretary, acknowledged that some of the targets hit could be rebuilt in a year. Pentagon analysts have estimated less than serious damage to about 70 per cent of the 97 targets hit over the four nights of attacks.

Tony Blair said yesterday that targets included 27 air defence systems, 20 command, control, and communications centres, 10 bases of the elite Republican Guard, and 30 sites involved in making weapons of mass destruction. They included a facility to build unmanned aircraft said to be designed for dropping anthrax — what General Sir Charles Guthrie, chief of the defence staff, called "the anthrax air force" and "drones of death". The bombing raids had set back Saddam's capacity to deliver these "terrible weapons" by missile or drones by several years, he said.

Sir Charles said it would take Saddam years to "recreate an air defence network" while Mr Blair insisted that the operation had shown the people of Iraq "that we can strike hard against his privileged Republican Guard, key props for his regime and its military capability". Iraq's conscript army, he emphasised, was not targeted.

In a reference to the Republican Guard, Mr Blair said Britain and the US had sent "a very strong signal to [Saddam's] top echelons of repression ... They now know they are the first in line."

A Republican Guard barracks in Tikrit, Saddam's family and clan base 100 miles north of Baghdad, was attacked and a video clip produced by the Ministry of Defence showed RAF Tornados hitting a Republican Guard base in southern Iraq.

Sir Charles said there was evidence that Saddam had tried to disperse guard detachments "but he miscalculated". He added: "The plan was in effect very simple. Just as a car is made useless with the engine electronics removed, so Saddam's military machine cannot function without a few key elements."

A Pentagon photograph showed a Republican Guard barracks in north-west Iraq severely damaged by 500lb bombs from a B-1 bomber. Journalists staying at the Rashid hotel in downtown Baghdad saw missiles hit areas containing headquarters of the special security services and the command centre of the paramilitary Popular Army. They said the headquarters of the Military Industrial Corporation, which runs Iraq's factories, had been gutted. The area around Saddam's biggest palace was hit, but his whereabouts were not known at the time. Other targets they listed included the headquarters of the ruling Baath Party, and al-Mustansiriya University.

Iraqi officials reported damage to what they consider civilian facilities, such as a house belonging to Saddam's daughter Hala. Reports said the house had been destroyed, but no one was hurt.

Officials said many facilities hit were being monitored by UN arms inspectors to prevent renewal of weapons production. One such target was the Nida heavy machinery factory south of Baghdad.

Mr Cohen said: "From the beginning of this operation, we've been careful to set realistic goals. We've also been careful not to either overstate or exaggerate the results as intelligence analysts study the very preliminary data."

Responding to criticism that the raids had failed in their objectives, Mr Cohen said: "Some have characterised moderate damage as somehow being less than successful [but] when we make these preliminary assessments, what looks either to be light or moderate cannot be calibrated in terms of a normal understanding."

Independent analysts point out that it is particularly difficult to destroy Iraq's chemical and biological warfare capability since it is easy for Saddam to hide both the substances and information on how to manufacture them, some of which is held on computer disks.

Mr Blair yesterday rejected the argument that the only course of action should be to depose Saddam — only thousands of ground troops could guarantee that. That, he said, would be disproportionate. He added: "But just because we can't get in the cage and strike him down, it doesn't mean we should leave the cage untouched and the bars too fragile to hold him. What we have done is to put him back firmly in the cage and secure it."

The Prime Minister justified the military action by referring to "a new global reality. If those who abuse force to wage war are not confronted by those willing to use force to maintain peace, war becomes more likely."

The cost of Operation Desert Fox in cruise missiles alone is about £187 million. The RAF's attacks on Iraq cost Britain £25 million, Paul Beaver of Janes Defence Weekly estimated yesterday.



'Just as a car is useless with the electronics removed, Iraq's war machine cannot function without a few key elements'
Sir Charles Guthrie (left)

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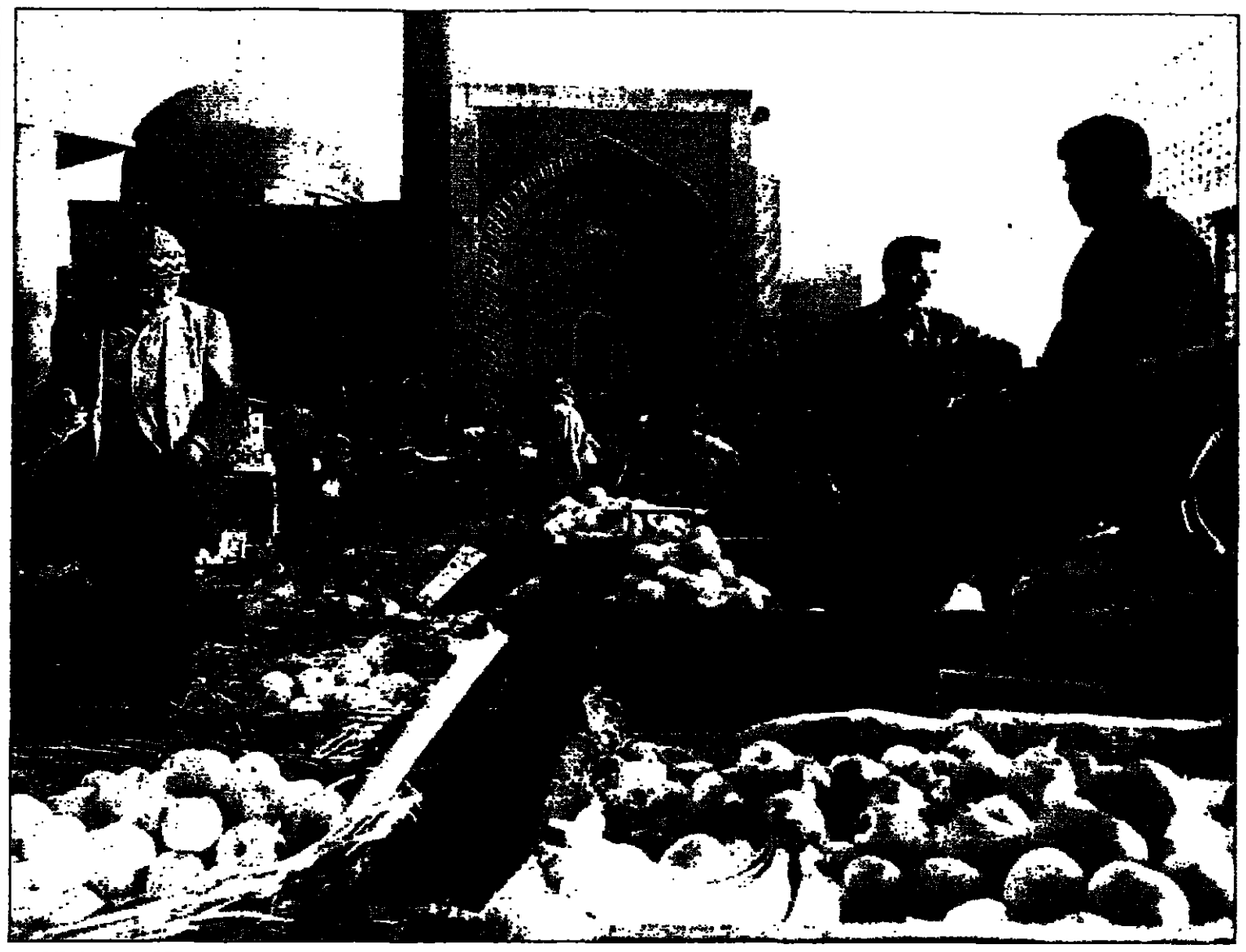
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Iraq: After the missiles

Some of those now serving as Labour ministers had protested during the first Gulf war in 1991







A man surveys missile damage near Baghdad's labour and social affairs ministry yesterday, while in central Baghdad (right), life goes on as normal after the announcement that the bombing is over PHOTOGRAPHS: KARIM SAHIB (left) and PETER DEJONG

Peace, but little comfort or joy

BAGHDAD: Despite a ceasefire, **David Sharrock** finds little evidence of seasonal cheer among members of the city's shrinking Christian community

IT WILL be a peaceful Christmas after all in Baghdad. At least that is what the Syrian Catholic congregation of the Cathedral of Our Lady of Deliverance were praying for yesterday as they gathered for Sunday mass.

Only a few hours earlier the newly impeached President Bill Clinton and Tony Blair had announced that their bombing mission had been successfully completed: Saddam's capability to threaten his neighbours had been usefully "degraded".

Just a few hours before the ceasefire announcement the last cruise missiles to fall on Baghdad had blazed across the sky for the fourth and final night. One of the missiles had come to earth without detonating, nevertheless causing substantial damage to grounds belonging to the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs in the university district. Three guards were injured, according to officials.

Delighted to have some proof that the famed accuracy of these "smart weapons" was either a myth or that their Western persecutors were deliberately targeting innocent civilians, the Ministry of Information rapidly organised a press convoy which, hurtling through the blackout conditions, doubtless sent US tracker satellites monitoring unusual activity in Baghdad into a lather. An enormous clay hole, a ruined gatehouse and two trashed cars were all the evidence that the cruise had gone astray. I found what appeared to be a wing fin tip with a serial number printed on it. The heavy metal stump stank of cordite.

Flailing around in the darkness and mud, several TV crews were reprimanded when they began turning their lights away from the wreckage to what lay beyond: a mural of Saddam with a little girl in a ballgown on his knee. Locals said we were within metres of a military academy for senior ranking army officers — Iraq's equivalent of Sandhurst.

The last bombardment took place shortly after 9.30pm on Saturday. But the uncertainty of what else lay in store and the first night of Ramadan, the Muslim holy month, meant that the city was slow to wake up to the news of the ceasefire yesterday morning.

Munzer Kazanchi, a Christian Arab, had been listening intently to the BBC World Service all night. Although the news was good, his family had still chosen to stay home this morning instead of accompanying him to church.

Of Baghdad's estimated 250,000 Syrian Catholics, some 200 were gathered in their modern cathedral for the last Sunday before Christmas Day. It should have been a joyful morning but the mass was dedicated to Mr Kazanchi's cousin, Fuad Nakasha, who died three days earlier of a heart attack.

After a sombre service, the congregation of smartly dressed elderly men and women, with a few children, spilled out of the cathedral and chatted briefly with one another in front of a grotto dedicated to the Virgin Mary — a striking monument in a Muslim nation where the only image given official approval is that of Saddam.

Mr Kazanchi and other relatives were in no doubt that it was the overnight bombing raids that had caused Fuad's heart to fail. "He was in perfect health, a civil engineer with a wife and children to support," said Mr Kazanchi.

Another cousin of the dead man, 28-year-old Ra'ad Nakasha, said: "He was only 60 and was a good and active man but the bombs really upset him. He just woke up one morning, had breakfast and then suddenly we lost him."



'Can you tell me what these bombs have achieved? Has anything changed? Only our suffering has increased, nothing else'
Baghdad woman

The profile of Baghdad's small Christian community fitted Ra'ad like a glove: highly educated, relatively wealthy and emigrating. He said he hoped to join his brother soon in New Zealand, but when asked why he wanted to leave abruptly made his apologies and left.

A middle-aged woman, after being assured that her name would not be printed, took me to one side and admitted that the Christian community was shrinking fast. "Those who can get out are doing so. I want my children to go too, but I will stay. I am too old to begin again," she said

"But I have a question also for you. Can you tell me what these bombs have achieved? Has anything changed between now and before last week? Only our suffering has increased, nothing else."

Mr Kazanchi said the air strikes had cast a shadow over their Christmas celebrations. His wife would cook a turkey stuffed with rice and lamb and he would buy gifts for his daughter and son. But their friends from Jordan, who had arrived to spend the Christmas season with them a week earlier, had returned home when the bombs began to fall and so they felt very sad and alone.

The priest, Monsignor Rafael Kuteimy, turned to speak. "These are very sad days. The Americans have bombed us for nothing. We don't understand why. It's the Iraqi people who decide if they want Saddam as their president. We ask the Americans to leave us in peace. Perhaps people abroad do not understand that."

Later, as life in Baghdad resumed its familiar routines and the city air was once more choked with fumes from the heavy traffic, Saddam appeared on television for the second time in three days. Invoking God's name, he congratulated his people for their successful resistance. "God is great," was his message

Critics' cruise missiles targeted on Blair

BRITAIN: Prime Minister has lacked wholehearted support for war, says **Ewen MacAskill**

TONY BLAIR spent a lot of time yesterday answering questions from the media on the brief Iraqi war. He had a lot of persuading to do and will have a lot more in the weeks ahead.

Will this turn out to have been a good war for Mr Blair, a necessary operation to curb an evil dictator? Or will it be seen as over-hasty and ill-judged, a pointless action? In the worst scenario, will Mr Blair be perceived as having acted at the behest of the US, to help a president in trouble at home?

Polls may show the Prime Minister has taken the public with him, even though there seems to have been little enthusiasm for this war, other than the discordant jingoism in the Sun. But the Labour Party is another matter.

Although Tam Dalyell, Tony Benn and George Galloway were in a distinct minority when the war was debated in the Commons, their queasiness about the bombing of Iraq was shared by many of their colleagues. Some of those now serving as ministers had protested during the first Gulf war in 1991 and there is no reason to believe they have changed their minds. Anecdotal evidence also suggests doubts among party activists.

The Prime Minister has opened himself up, for the first time in a long time, to criticisms from the Tories that are finding their mark. The shadow Home Secretary, Michael Howard, yesterday called for a clear strategy and challenged Mr Blair's assertions on sanctions, nuclear inspectors and building a diplomatic consensus.

Mr Blair, at his press conference, insisted the short campaign had been "the right course and a just cause" because, without it, Saddam Hussein would have built up his weapons and terrorised the region.

On the debit side, the Prime Minister will have to live for weeks and months with the suspicion that he acted too readily to please President Clinton.

Throughout this brief action, Mr Blair and his ministers have never looked entirely comfortable.

That is partly because the Labour Party's history has a strain of pacificism running through it. When Mr Blair spoke of "degrading" Saddam's military machine it did not sound right coming from a Labour prime minister.

Another part of Labour history is a commitment to international law and the United Nations, and yet Britain has operated with the US without clear UN support.

In four days Mr Blair lost the image of working closer with other European countries that he has spent 18 months cultivating.

When dealing with the Northern Ireland peace process, Mr Blair appeared confident and had the wholehearted support of his party, the public and the world. There is not the same confidence or support for this action, and it seems headed for the deficit column.

US and Britain brace for terrorist reprisals

SECURITY: Americans at home and abroad are on high alert, writes **Mark Tran** in New York

NOW that the air strikes have been called off, the focus for British and US intelligence officers will switch to a new target: how to prevent Iraq and its friends from taking retaliatory terrorist action.

The Australian government yesterday confirmed that one of its citizens, the chief United Nations weapons inspector Richard Butler, had received death threats after issuing the report that prompted the bombing of Iraq.

Mr Butler arrived at the UN in New York last week with a police escort. The security detail was one of several precautionary measures as the US braces itself for attacks from Muslim extremists.

Last week it closed 38 embassies in Africa for at least two days against possible reprisals. The secretary of state, Madeleine Albright, said the administration took this highly unusual step on Thursday and Friday "because we are concerned about general threats and the heightened situation".

The state department yesterday said no decision had been taken about their reopening this week.

"A number of African posts have received threats in recent weeks and our caution is fully justified," a state department official said.

The embassies were closed, in part, to avoid a repetition of the US embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania in August that killed more than 220 people, including 12 Americans.

After the attacks, President Clinton ordered cruise missile strikes at a chemicals factory in Sudan and camps in Afghanistan run by the Saudi Osama bin Laden, the FBI's most wanted international terrorist.

Even before the bombing of Iraq, US intelligence officials warned they had evidence that Bin Laden might be planning an attack on Washington or New York in retaliation for the US raid on his Afghan camp.

In a coup for the US, a suspected top aide of Bin Laden was yesterday turned over to US officials in Germany for extradition. Mamdouh Mahmud Salim was taken to Munich airport and placed on a flight to the US, a Bavarian justice ministry spokesman, Gerhard Zierl, said.

The US is concerned not only about terrorist attacks but more generalised anger in the Arab world that may engulf Americans. The state department has issued a worldwide warning to Americans to take precautions abroad.

In Morocco yesterday tens of thousands of demonstrators protested in the capital Rabat against the strikes on Iraq. Shouting "America, enemy of the people", they burned US and British flags.

In New York hundreds of extra police, and security guards blanketed airports, bus and train stations, federal buildings and tourist areas.

The police commissioner, Howard Safir, said the city was on high alert. "We always assume the worst possible case and take the precautions necessary," he said.

Mortgages

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The following interest rates for mortgages provided by Banking Direct, a Division of Bank of Scotland, will apply with effect from 4th January 1999 for both new and existing borrowers.

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Centrebank Mortgage Rate (Variable) 7.69% per annum.

Stabilised Charging Rate 7.99% per annum.

Adaptable Mortgage Plan Charging Rate 7.85% per annum.

Banking Direct Mortgage Rate Plus (Variable) 8.19% per annum.

Centrebank Mortgage Rate Plus (Variable) 8.19% per annum.

Home Loan Rate 7.69% per annum.

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President impeached

They chatted and gossiped, leisurely running their swipe cards through the voting machines





President Clinton and his wife, Hillary, tightly clasping hands at the White House while presenting confident faces to the world. He was about to address the nation following the House of Representatives' impeachment vote PHOTOGRAPHS: REX BANNER

Calculating Clinton's chances

THE JURY: In the labyrinth of Senate politics, hopes of a censure deal hover. **Martin Kettle** reports on the rules, procedures and haggling that will frame the president's trial

ON January 6, 100 state senators — a majority of them Bill Clinton's political foes — will take their seats in the wood-panelled chamber on Capitol Hill and inaugurate the first trial this century of an impeached American president.

The fact that proceedings are expected to last between three to six months is concentrating the minds of the senators who will be required to sit at their desks for each day's hearings.

It is not just the bum-numbing qualities of the seats that are causing concern among the 55 Republicans and 45 Democrats. It is also the uncomfortable but inescapable fact that they now control the president's fate.

The Senate — which consists of two elected members from each state — is the sole arbiter of Mr Clinton's future, now that the lower House of Representatives has handed up the charges of perjury and obstruction of justice.

Mr Clinton, however, is determined that there will not be a trial, and his aides have already begun to probe the possibility of a compromise deal — under which the senate would censure and fine the president, leaving him disgraced but not dismissed.

At present, his chances of such a compromise look promising. A two-thirds majority of 67 votes is required to throw Mr Clinton out of office, and with the Republicans commanding 55 votes at most, the odds are that the trial will end in an acquittal. In that case, says the White House, why not spare the nation the long spectacle and agree a quicker and more dignified third way?

Many political realists in both parties agree, including the man Mr Clinton beat for the presidency in 1996, former senator Bob Dole. So does former Republican president Gerald Ford. Some of today's senators have signalled they are in the market for a compromise too.

But, as the events of the past three months have shown, it is one thing to wish for a compromise deal and a very different thing to get one. Though the conservative Republicans who dominate the party are hostile to a compromise, the White House has also fluffed a number of chances to make a deal too.

Many Republicans, including the Senate majority leader Trent Lott, privately hope that Mr Clinton can be forced to resign. Hopes and fears that public opinion will turn against Mr Clinton probably guarantees that there will be no quick censure deal.

Mr Clinton's continued defiant approach to the process remains a very serious problem. On Saturday, within hours of becoming the first elected president to be impeached, he again chose to belittle the charges against him, saying they related to "what I did wrong in my personal life", and blaming the Republicans for what the spin-doctors now call "the politics of personal destruction".

There is little doubt that most Americans want the political self-laceration to stop. But it is an open question whether they really see Mr Clinton as part of the solution or as part of the problem. At the moment, just, he tends to get the benefit of the doubt among Americans who do not see why their political leaders cannot give them a quiet life. But that may not continue.

The presidential tactics smack of the politics of continued self-delusion. But that does not mean that a compromise will not happen, and there will be intensive behind-the-scenes efforts to bring it about — perhaps involving the Northern Ireland peacemaker, former senator George Mitchell.

The Senate will begin pre-trial proceedings on January 6, with senators being sworn in as jurors for the trial, and Chief Justice William Rehnquist presiding. Mr Clinton will be summoned to appear to answer the charges — though he is not expected to show up in person — and a trial date will be set. Most observers expect a gap of about a month.

This pre-trial period is the time in which the real effort to strike a compromise deal will become intense. Unlike in a normal trial, the senators can at any stage choose to end the impeachment trial by a simple majority. This discretion could be the key to the solution that the Clinton camp is now seeking.

To achieve that deal, however, the White House and its allies must win a second Senate numbers game. Just as the the 55 Republicans will need at least 12 Democrats in order to convict Mr Clinton, so the 45 Democrats will need at least six Republicans to secure the simple majority to bring the trial to an end.

Once it starts, the trial must take precedence over all other congressional business. That means the Senate sitting every working day until the process is complete. In practice, that will see senators sitting every morning to deal with legislative and political business, then going into trial mode from late morning onwards.

The trial will follow adversarial rules. The case will be presented by the trial "managers", who will make the prosecution case. These managers, who were appointed by the House on Saturday after the impeachment votes, consist of a group of Republican members of the House judiciary committee, headed by Congressman Henry Hyde, the committee chairman. They will be assisted by the committee's lawyers, headed by David Schippers, and others appointed by them.

Mr Clinton will be represented by a team of lawyers, probably including the White House senior counsel Charles Ruff and special counsel Greg Craig, as well as Mr Clinton's private lawyers, David Kendall and Nicole Seligman.

As in any other trial, witnesses can be called, so there is every likelihood of the principals in the Starr Report being asked to testify. Monica Lewinsky would obviously be the most eagerly awaited witness, but all the other familiar figures will get their day.

If senators want to participate, except as jurors, they must ask a written question through the presiding judge.

The involvement of the Chief Justice will result in the Supreme Court's business, as well as that of the Senate, being disrupted by the trial.

When the trial has finished, Senate will then go into closed session to consider its verdict. Then, and only then, can the senators express their views, in short speeches limited to 15 minutes each.

The clerk of the senate will read out the name of each senator, who will answer "convict" or "acquit".

Conviction automatically means dismissal and the Senate's only discretion on conviction is whether to impose the additional penalty of barring the president from holding public office again.

Given Mr Clinton's relative youth — he will be 55 when he leaves the White House, even if he is not convicted — this is a sentence with teeth.

History made with solemnity and farce

THE VOTE: Few in the House were even paying attention when the fateful moment came, reports **Jonathan Freedland**

HISTORY, when it comes, does not always know how to behave. It doesn't always sit up straight; sometimes it forgets to bow its head in reverence for the moment. It fails to remember the future generations who will look back and judge.

So it was when the 435 members of the US House of Representatives cast the vote that will etch their own place in history. They did not give the chroniclers of the future the archive pictures they will expect — sombre rows of men and women, their shoulders heavy with responsibility, silently resolving to impeach the President of the United States for only the second time in that nation's history.

Instead they milled around, chatted and gossiped, leisurely running their swipe-cards through the electronic voting machines that tallied up their votes on two scoreboards.

The House did not sit as one, on the edge of its seat, waiting for the fateful moment which would make Bill Clinton the first impeached president since Andrew Johnson in 1868, a figure more disgraced even than Richard Nixon. When that moment came, at 1.20pm on Saturday, and the column marked "Yea" reached the winning post of 218 votes, few on the floor were paying attention. It fell to the history conscious press gallery to point at the board and to pause at what they had witnessed.

Maybe it was all too much. For Saturday was a day of drama overdose, coming at the end of a too-dramatic week. The Representatives were exhausted from five days of late-night debates, security briefings on the Gulf and the party caucuses which had rocked with dramas of their own. The result was an impeachment session that veered from the focused to the confused, from the solemn to the farcical. "A disaster movie scripted by the Marx Brothers," quipped Democrat Barney Frank.

Within minutes came a twist that threatened to overshadow even the monumental business before the House. Republican Bob Livingston of Louisiana, destined to be the new Speaker, stepped forward and called on President Clinton to resign.

"No, you resign!" bellowed a chorus of Democrats, shocking a chamber less prone to such parliamentary barracking than our own House of Commons. More swiftly than any of them could have anticipated, Mr Livingston obliged.

First, he apologised for his own record of serial adultery, which he had been forced to confess on Thursday. Then, "I must set the example that I hope President Clinton will follow. I will not stand for Speaker..."

The oxygen sucked out of the chamber, a ghostly silence descended. The American system of democracy is not like our own: parliamentary resignations are rare, especially ones which come as a genuine surprise. There had been no leak, no speculation.

Falteringly, the House recovered and continued the debate which had consumed 12 hours the previous day. The speeches were never longer than five minutes, some just 90 seconds, many of them repetitive and gratuitous, members addressing not the House, but the TV audience in their own districts back home.

Republicans insisted that they were not punishing sex, but perjury. At stake was the rule of law, the underpinning of the US Constitution. Democrats pleaded for proportionality, a punishment that fitted President Clinton's crime.

There were moments of

Dick Gephardt delivered the best speech of his career. "We are on the brink of the abyss," he pleaded, begging for a reprieve

grandeur. Dick Gephardt, the Democrats' leader in the House, delivered the best speech of his career. "We are on the brink of the abyss," he pleaded, begging for a last-minute reprieve. "The only way to stop this insanity is through the force of our own will."

His own party leapt to their feet, offering a sustained ovation. Mr Gephardt waded through them, hugged by each in turn, his back slapped, his hand shaken — a display of that special brand of unity unique to the lost cause. He had fought the most valiant fight, but his own side knew they were beaten.

The contrast in that moment was clear. On one side of the House were the Democrats. If you blurred your eyes, it was an effusion of colour. Women dressed in purple, green and red; men with black or brown faces; some old, some young. The Republican side remained seated, an assembly of whey-faced, thin-lipped, blue-blazered men. They were sitting — in judgment. The Democrats staged a walkout but, with only one exit open, got clogged up. Once out, they had to troop back in again 7½ minutes later to vote against what they called a partisan *coup d'état*.

By then their fury had run out. Some slumped in their seats, forlornly watching the scoreboard. Republicans clustered, plotting the Livingston succession. The clock ticked away the 15 minutes of voting time. The Yeas mounted, the Nays trailed. Until the hammer came down, and the acting Speaker announced the result: impeachment.

There were three more votes, for each of the remaining articles. As soon as they were done, there was a stampede for the doors, like thieves escaping the scene of the crime. But Henry Hyde, the Republican judiciary chairman who became Bill Clinton's chief prosecutor, stayed behind, charged with one more task.

He had to walk the marbled halls to the office of the secretary of the Senate, to hand over formally the articles of impeachment, now in a leatherbound folder. "Here," the gesture seemed to say, "you deal with it."

Hope backs hometown boy

LOCAL HERO: Michael Ellison traces Billy Blyth's origins in Arkansas

IF ONLY Billy Blyth had turned out more like Mike Huckabee then maybe it would never have come to this. In fact, their paths did run in parallel for a while: both come from Hope, and both were elected governor of Arkansas. There the similarities end. Mike Huckabee became a Baptist preacher and Billy Blyth became Bill Clinton.

Hempstead county has plenty of Baptist preachers. But there is only one Bill Clinton, and his story, if not quite log-cabin-to-White-House, shows it is still possible in the United States to make it to the top.

"I still remember a place called Hope," Mr Clinton said when the Democrats made him their candidate for president nearly seven years ago. The town still remembers him, too, even if he was only seven when he left.

This settlement of 11,000 owes its identity to the president, and it takes his problems personally.

Elaine Johnson has a word for what the Republicans are doing. "It is unAmerican," says the proprietor of the Presidential Shoppe, a name which almost suggests he is already history.

There are no monuments yet to Governor Huckabee. But he will have done himself no harm at the weekend when he signed the death warrants of two murderers who will have a lethal injection on the same day — the fourth multiple execution in as many years in the Natural State.

It was into this community that Billy Blyth was born in 1946 of a vivacious mother and a much-married father, already four months dead in a car wreck. Grandparents looked after the child in a wood-frame house for his first four years.

Then Mom Virginia married Roger Clinton, a used car dealer and runner of illicit liquor, and the family moved up the road to Hot Springs. Bill Clinton, who took his stepfather's name at 15, has probably never forgotten the honk of the freight trains in Hope, founded only 123 years ago by a railroad pioneer.

But if the president wants to jog his memory he need only drop into Hope Visitors' Centre. Here is young Billy Blyth in his Hopalong Cassidy outfit, with a classmate, with stepfather Roger, and in a hospital bed after breaking a leg.

All of a sudden the photographs show a grown man, Governor Clinton, then President Clinton.

"We're ashamed of what happened but we're not ashamed of him," says Minnie Ella Schmitt, aged 71, who works in the centre. "I voted for him every time he stood for anything. He's let a lot of people down but he's a hometown boy, we raised him up from when he was a little bitty boy. We're a church-going bunch of people here in the Christian belt and I can't approve of his life in the sinning department.

"He's always too busy doing other things to come here now. He only makes it for the funerals. Uncle Buddy was the last in '97."

You are more than welcome to eat in Hope at 9pm, except that you will be told, with great Southern civility, that they're shut. Perhaps a drink, then? Sorry, Hempstead is a dry county.

Across the Red River in Fulton, Wanda Koontz, aged 45, stands behind the counter of the Boll Weevil beer store. "If Hillary's not hyping on it why should we?" she says. "The people that's persecuting him, there's a lot of them done worse."

Even the people who don't care for the president want him to stay. "I'm really not for Clinton but what he's done is not worthy of impeachment," says Shelby Haynie, aged 48, leaning against a pawn shop hunting-rifle rack. "If he goes we get Gore, and he's too strict on gun control."

Pastor Roy Parker left Mr Clinton out of his sermon yesterday. The congregation had heard enough about that. But the passage from Isaiah I may have carried a message. "I have swept away your offences like a cloud, your sins like the morning mist. Return to me, for I have redeemed you."

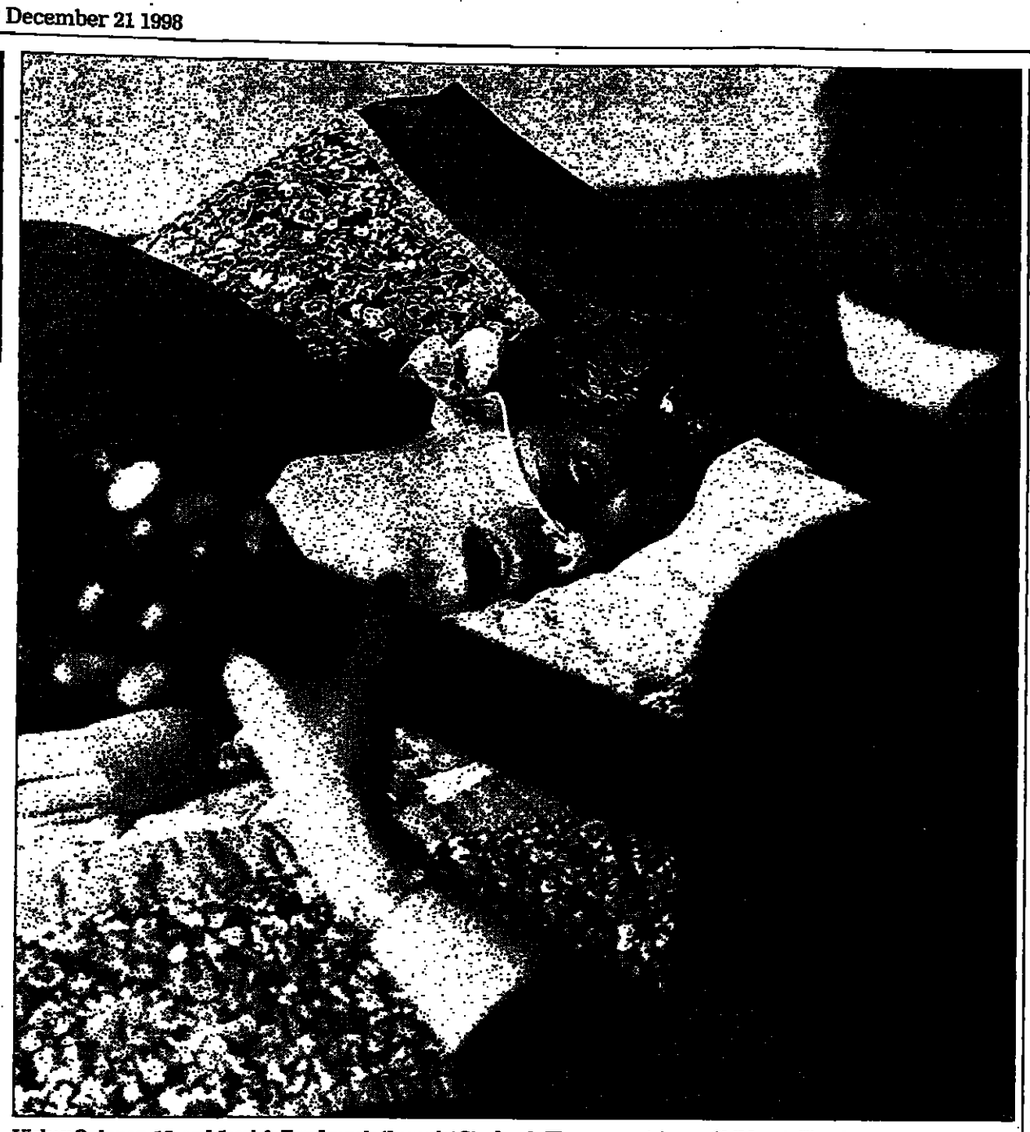
society

Every Wednesday in the

The Guardian EUROPE

The Guardian Christmas appeal

The Guardian's Christmas appeal offers readers the chance to donate to up to eight charities. Today Amelia Gentleman reports on the work of Jessie's Fund



Vickey Quinney, 15, and Jessie's Fund music therapist Stephanie Thompson at Acorn Children's Hospice PHOTOGRAPH: CLAIRE LIM

Music that eases the last days of dying children

WHEN everything else has failed, one of the simplest and most effective ways to help terminally ill children cope with the prospect of death is music.

Everyone has the ability to respond to music. With its capacity to soothe, inspire and heal, it can transcend illness and disability in a way nothing else can. As specialists begin to appreciate its power, music therapy is increasingly being used to support dying children in their last weeks.

Carers report that they have been able to make contact with children no longer able to communicate in any other way. Therapists use it to boost the quality of the remaining life the children may have. Jessie's Fund, a small and relatively new charity, is working to raise money to bring this therapy to children's hospices around the country. The treatment does not come cheap, but its benefits are startling.

Leslie Schatzberger, the charity's founder, said: "Because there is so little life left, the time that they have must be absolutely the highest quality."

This is a subject close to her heart; her own daughter, Jessie George, became seriously ill soon after her ninth birthday. "At first the doctors thought it might be just an ear infection — but she continued to feel dizzy and then started to see double. She was diagnosed with a brain stem tumour in December 1993," she says. "We knew there was an incredibly small chance of her survival."

The family decided to raise money to send her for treatment in America. But she was never well enough to go, and five months later she died.

With some £12,000 already raised for the trip to America, Jessie's parents, both professional musicians, decided to spend it on music therapy for other children in hospices. Jessie's Fund was set up in memory of their daughter.

The charity aims to enable every UK children's hospice to have access to a part-time qualified therapist by 2002. Stephanie Thompson, one of the music therapists sponsored by Jessie's Fund, is an ardent proponent of its effects. She explains: "It is more about boosting children's quality of life in their last days than teaching them anything specific.

"Dying is such a difficult and bewildering time for children — especially when they are going through difficult and painful treatment — that a lot of them don't know how they feel. They are still very young and death is a big issue."

Usually both child and therapist take part, playing, singing and listening. Children are not taught how to play an instrument, but are encouraged to use percussion and other accessible instruments to participate in the session. Recent research suggests that music releases endorphins, the brain's painkillers, but the complete advantages of therapy are hard to pin down.

"Music can have a very profound effect," Ms Thompson says. "It can release frustrations and identify moods and feelings they didn't even know they were experiencing."

Ms Schatzberger explains that the sessions are particularly useful for children who are losing control over their lives as they lose the ability to speak or move. "Through music, they can convey feelings without using words."

She relates anecdotes which demonstrate the unexpected power of music. For months one two-year-old girl spent her waking hours crying. Nothing could comfort her, except music sessions, when she would become peaceful. "The trauma of being trapped in a life so painful that she had to express herself by crying all the time was so intense, that to be able to have some relief was fantastic," Ms Schatzberger says.

There was also a teenage boy, who had been in a persistent vegetative state for more than a year. Doctors said there was no hope of ever getting through to him. Through therapy, using electronic instruments, he began to be able to control sound by moving his head. "He started to cry. He had been trapped without communicating."

Occasionally distressing, Ms Thompson also finds the time she spends at the Acorn Children's Hospice in Birmingham extremely rewarding. "It is a great privilege to share this time with someone. It is the end of something, but it isn't necessarily a sad time; the focus is not on ending, but on quality," she says.

"Sometimes all you're doing is working on getting a smile out of someone."

The charity

☐ Jessie's Fund is a registered charity dedicated to helping sick children through music. It promotes the use of music therapy in children's hospices, helping children who are dying as a result of illness or disability.

☐ The human ability to appreciate and respond to music is inborn and usually remains unimpaired by handicap, injury or illness. Music therapy offers a safe, space to release feelings.

☐ Jessie's Fund is a winner of the Guardian Jerwood prize for small charities. It aims to provide hospices with musical instruments and staff trained in basic techniques of music therapy. By 2002 it aims to equip the country's 16 children's hospices and have a trained music therapist working at least one day a week.

☐ Five hospices are already equipped. The charity provides 100 per cent of the cost for the first year, 50 per cent for the second year and 25 per cent for the third year — but it needs financial support to continue its work.

☐ A £1,000 donation will equip a hospice with a basic range of musical instruments. A part-time music therapist costs £150 a week.

The Guardian
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Search for girl, 2, after mother is found murdered

Martin Walker

POLICE across the country are searching for a two-year-old girl who has vanished after the brutal beating and murder of her mother.

Jade Lester was last seen in the Kensington area of central Liverpool, where unemployed Sharon Lester, aged 22, was found dead with multiple stab wounds by the child's distraught grandmother at the weekend.

Fifty Merseyside detectives led by an assistant chief constable have been put on the case, with senior officers saying yesterday that they were "desperately anxious" about the little girl.

Ms Lester's boyfriend, John Park, a 24-year-old unemployed joiner from Tuebrook, Liverpool, is being interviewed, but has told police that he has no idea where Jade may be.

Det Supt Russ Walsh said that it was critical that they find Jade's father, who used to live with Miss Lester and his daughter but has moved elsewhere.

Mr Walsh also appealed for information about two men seen at the murder house in Ling Street with a white van only an hour before Ms Lester's body was found.

Witnesses from the street have described a man in his 20s coming out of Ms Lester's house at 12.30pm on Saturday and signalling to the driver of the van, a "box-type" vehicle with roller shutters at the rear, to take it round to an alley at the back of the house. Mr Walsh said: "We are anxious to trace both the driver and the person at the premises, as well as a man who was repairing a yellow van in Ling Street at the time the men were seen."

Detectives have not established a motive for the killing of Ms Lester, whose body was found in a downstairs room. She had been severely beaten before being stabbed with a sharp implement which has not been found.

Tests have suggested that the murder may have taken place 48 hours before Ms Lester's body was discovered by her mother, who collapsed in front of neighbours.

Mr Walsh said that the time lag, and the last definite sighting of Jade a week before the murder, increased anxiety about her.

Forensic experts will return to the house today to continue checks for any sign of a break-in. Detectives are also trying to establish if anything is missing from the house.

Assistant Chief Constable Paul Stephenson said yesterday: "Our prime concern is to ensure that the little girl is safe and well, and to ease the distress of the family, which is considerable. We want anyone who is with Jade at this time or knows where she is to make contact and confirm that she is safe and well."

Residents in Ling Street returned from a church Christmas party to find Ms Lester's house sealed off and police everywhere. Cleaner June Joel, aged 41, said they had moved in only recently.

Supermarkets 'charge more inpoor areas'

Silvia Plahl

THE poor are paying more than the better off this Christmas for a typical selection of seasonal goods, a consumers' survey of supermarkets reveals today.

Price wars between rival suburban outlets have added to the pinch in low income areas, where poor transport and limited choice create a virtually captive market.

Stark contrasts in the checks on 100 stores include a 59p offer for Sainsbury's 100g pack of own-brand coffee in relatively comfortable Crosby, Merseyside, compared with £1.79 for Kwik Save's own brand at Heathtown, West Midlands, an area of very high deprivation.

The total basket at Crosby Sainsbury, including turkey, sprouts and crackers, cost £32.32 — £10 less than the same order at Sainsbury, Cavendish Drive, a few miles away but in a much less well-off area.

The survey, carried out in the second week of December by the charity Citizen Organising Foundation (COF), will be sent to the Office of Fair Trading by the group, which is also seeking talks with the leading supermarkets.

Peter Powers, of COF, said: "This survey, carried out by ordinary people in their own communities, shows how retailers use their local monopoly power in poorer neighbourhoods to extort excessive profits from the people who can least afford it."

The COF monitors, based on churches, schools, mosques, trade unions and other local groups, checked prices of basic goods, including soup, vegetables and bread, along with Christmas specialities like pudding and satsumas. The survey at branches of Tesco, Sainsbury, Somerfield, Asda, the Co-op and Kwik Save found the four most expensive baskets at Sainsbury in Wolverhampton town centre (£54.59), Tesco in Canary Wharf, east London (£49.33), Sainsbury in Whitechapel, east London (£48.70), and Somerfield in Hackney, east London (£47.16). The lowest price was at Kwik Save, in middle income Tettenhall, Wolverhampton (£29.70).

Yvonne Hayes, aged 46, a mother of four, went to Tesco in Parson Cross, north Sheffield, one of the largest council estates in Europe. "It was interesting because I don't usually shop there. Actually it wasn't a bad shop for this area. You get bread for 19p and a tin of beans is 9p. But there were several Christmas puddings at £7.50. I did wonder how many people on the estate could afford that."

Mandy Aitken, aged 34, also a mother of four and organiser of Sheffield's COF group, Impact, claimed: "There's a degree of evidence that supermarkets seem to be charging more in poorer areas, either because of competition in the middle-class estates or because people on the working-class estate haven't the chance to get away to the out-of-town centres. You are sort of penalised for having to shop locally."

Kwik Save and the Co-op came out in the survey at the bottom of the price range, but local variations were also marked.

Mr Powers said: "We hope the Office of Fair Trading report to be published in the new year will encourage the Government to constrain the alarming power of the big four retailers."

COF will conduct follow-up surveys in the new year.

Bosnia author 'MI6 man'

Richard Norton-Taylor

DOMINIC Lawson, editor of the Sunday Telegraph, acknowledged yesterday that articles written under a false name when he was editor of the Spectator magazine were "probably" written by an MI6 officer.

The Guardian last week disclosed that "Kenneth Roberts", author of the articles which were written under a Sarajevo dateline in 1994, was a member of the British foreign intelligence service.

The articles appeared to be part of an attempt to influence public opinion during the Bosnian civil war by suggesting atrocities were being carried out by all sides. Mr Lawson told the Guardian he had no means of knowing whether the author was an MI6 officer. However, yesterday he said claims that "Kenneth Roberts" was in reality an MI6 agent were "probably right".

He referred to threats to the Times late last week from what that newspaper called "senior intelligence sources" that a D Notice would be served in an attempt to prevent the identity of "Kenneth Roberts" being revealed.

Mr Lawson also said in yesterday's Sunday Telegraph that he remembers asking "Kenneth Roberts" whether he had written under a pseudonym for any other publication. Mr Lawson said that he replied: "Yes, the Times."

Mr Lawson was alleged in the Commons last week to have been an MI6 "asset" who was paid for his services for British intelligence. Mr Lawson denied ever having been "an agent either paid or unpaid of MI6 or any other government agency". In his column yesterday, he wrote: "I have never worked for the intelligence services."

It was reported yesterday that British intelligence officers claimed to be journalists from the Spectator as a cover while working in Russia and eastern Europe. The Sunday Times claimed at least three MI6 officers were instructed to claim they were working for the magazine.

Roy Greenslade, G2, page 10

Spice Girls' Xmas triple

THE Spice Girls have topped the Christmas singles chart for the third year running with their Goodbye single.

They pipped Chef's Chocolate Salty Balls — a spin-off from the Channel 4 cartoon South Park.

Goodbye had sold nearly 200,000 copies, according to midweek sales figures, about 30,000 more than Chef.

Denise and Johnny's Especially For You reached number three, eclipsing Cher at number four with her former chart-topper Believe. The Beatles had consecutive Christmas chart-toppers from 1963 to 1965.

The Spice Girls have had a concerted marketing campaign, which began in the first half of November.

Crack on call as police clear dealers off streets

Alan Travis
Home Affairs Editor

CRACK cocaine addicts are turning to "pizza-style" telephone ordered home deliveries as police operations drive dealers off city streets.

New Home Office research says that crack has not taken hold in Britain in the same way as it has dominated the drug markets of America's urban ghettoes, but it does pose problems in a few English cities. The study, based on in-depth interviews with 79 new and long-term crack addicts in north-west England, shows that the drug is still being actively marketed by dealers.

"Given crack's negative image, it is often sold as 'rock' or 'stone', particulary to new, younger users. Established users receive a home delivery service," say the researchers. They add that in the last two years this has particularly been a feature of the drugs scene in the Greater Manchester area, where street sales have largely disappeared due to police activity.

The researchers traced the habits of one group of crack users over three years with the first interviews taking place in 1995.

By 1997, a quarter had given up crack, another quarter had cut down their consumption, but up to half were "resolute rockheads" who used crack daily alongside "considerable quantities" of other drugs, most notably heroin, methadone and cannabis. The researchers call this expensive kind of multi-drug habit a "rock repertoire".

More than two-thirds said they never injected crack, but smoked it, either on foil, or more commonly, in a pipe. The study also confirms strong links between drug-taking, crime and the black economy, and says the long-term addicts spent an average of £20,000 a year on their addictions. Crack prices had remained fairly stable over the three years.

Established users receive a home delivery service

Most raised the necessary funds through crime such as theft, shoplifting, fraud and burglary, with women engaging in prostitution and men in drug-dealing.

In-depth interviews with 29 new crack users showed that despite the drug's high cost and only brief "buzz", its use is slowly spreading. Most new users tended to be slightly younger, in their early 20s, and overwhelmingly white and male. The Home Office researchers say that crack use in England has, until now, mainly appealed to those with a history of heroin abuse, and who are unemployed and live in the poorest communities. "The most worrying development in this study was the discovery that there were some 'recreational' users, without any experience of heroin, or other opiates, who smoked crack as 'stone' and who felt they could manage and control its use as they had other drugs, such as amphetamines and ecstasy," say the researchers.

They add that crack's high price and ambivalent image has limited this spread, but they warn that if there is a significant drop in its street price then it will accelerate.

Evolving crack cocaine careers; Kevin Brain, Howard Parker and Tim Bottomley; Home Office Research Findings No 85

Man's body was 'expertly dismembered'

Simon Cooper

THE remains of a young man found on the banks of the Thames a week ago were expertly dismembered, possibly by someone with medical knowledge, police have revealed. But mystery surrounds who the victim was or why he was killed.

An international murder inquiry has now been launched after police could find no match for the man in UK missing persons files or in fingerprint records.

A total of 11 body parts were recovered from the foreshore of the Thames in Deptford, south-east London, after a passerby noticed them at last Monday.

A post-mortem the next day revealed the man was hit on the side of the head with a blunt instrument before being strangled. He is thought to have been killed only 24 hours before his remains were found.

He is described as being in his 20s, 5ft 7in to 5ft 9in tall, with olive cloured "Mediterranean type" skin, dark hair, dark brown eyes and of stocky build.

One of his most distinctive characteristics were his teeth, which were in "superb condition", although three are missing. The pathologist's report states the teeth were professionally removed, but had the roots left in — a common dentistry technique on the Continent. Interpol has now been called in.

Detective Chief Inspector Brian Bowden-Brown, who is leading the enquiry, said the only clues were the body parts themselves. "Each limb was in three pieces having been dismembered at the joint. It was done by someone who knew what they were doing; someone with medical knowledge, or a vet, or a butcher or someone used to cutting up meat."

The victim's torso, one foot and the lower part of one leg were still missing.

He was preparing to have a model of the man's face reconstructed by forensic experts. He hopes this might bring the same success enjoyed by Scottish police, who this week were able to solve a four-month-old mystery after scientists from Glasgow university produced a 3D computer-generated reconstruction of the face of a man found on the shores of Loch Lomond.

Spain mourns matador fêted by famous

John Hooper, Southern Europe Correspondent

FANS of bullfighting were yesterday mourning one of the great matadors of the 20th century. Antonio Ordóñez was among the very few to win comparison with the likes of Belmonte, Joselito and Manolete.

As several hundred packed into the Esperanza de Triana church in Seville for a funeral mass yesterday, the bullfighter's body was taken to the city's town hall so that people could pay their final respects.

Although Ordóñez was only 66 when he died on Saturday, he was a figure who inspired memories of a distant era. His most celebrated friendships were with Ernest Hemingway and Orson Welles, whose ashes were buried on his ranch near Ronda in southern Spain.

Ordóñez rose to fame in the 1950s. His subsequent rivalry with Luis Miguel Dominguín formed the basis for Hemingway's 1959 work The Dangerous Summer.

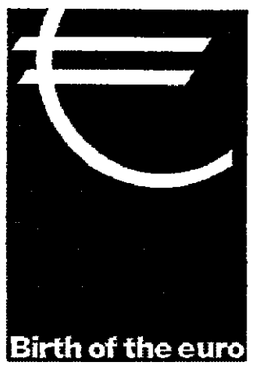
He also occupied a central role in one of the most thought-provoking books on bullfighting to be written by a non-Spaniard. Bull Fever, published in 1954 and written by the theatre critic Kenneth Tynan, followed two matadors with contrasting styles: the classically restrained Ordóñez, and Miguel Báez, known as "Litri".

Ordóñez was born in Ronda in 1932. He was the son of the celebrated matador Cayetano, who was fictionalised by Hemingway in The Sun Also Rises.



Ordóñez in his heyday

Swiss feel Europe's tightening grip



In the land of bankers, the single currency symbolises a more profound pressure for change, writes Stephen Bates in Geneva

FROM his office above the enormous Migros hypermarket in Etrembière, Guy Vibourel can watch with satisfaction as his customers' cars with their Swiss numberplates sweep in to do their Christmas shopping.

Nothing strange, except that although Migros is a Swiss company and many of its shoppers are Swiss, Etrembières is actually in France, even though it is only a mile or so outside Geneva.

Despite the limitations which the customs authorities at the border post down the road impose — only a couple of bottles of wine, no more than 8 ounces of meat per person in the car — many Swiss take the ride, because they know that the Swiss products they buy will be 25 per cent cheaper than in the company's supermarkets in Geneva.

Migros is booming: there will be a million customers at its two local French stores this year, more than a third of them Swiss.

Mr Vibourel does not expect that to change once the French swap their francs for euros. The tills are already programmed for such transactions, even though euro notes and coins will not be issued for another three years.

And he thinks the Swiss, who are not in the EU and not adopting the new currency, will not have any problems. If the Swiss franc remains mighty, especially if it stays stronger than the euro, they will want to come even more.

"If the Swiss franc is strong our prices will be even more attractive — we get 15 per cent more customers then," he says contentedly.

"The euro will be imposed on the Swiss as a second currency whether they are in or not. They will get used to it like a second language. At the moment they are just curious, because they are very attached to their own money, just like the British and the pound. But if the euro is strong ... well, we are very positive about the single currency.

"It will be good for our business. We have an extra advantage — Swiss people like coming here because we are a Swiss company, with Swiss standards, cleaner, and they can express their civic pride by coming here. And it's much cheaper."

The debate on the euro is just getting under way in Switzerland, but it is already feeding into a wider debate about the country's traditionally neutral and disengaged place in international affairs.

The Swiss are feeling under increasing pressure to join in institutions such as the United Nations and the European Union, and the single currency could hit them at the very core of their existence: their banks and finance houses.

There is a dilemma, too. Traditionally the Swiss franc has been strong but, with the arrival of the euro, the franc's very attractiveness may undermine the national economy.

If the euro is weak, investors from France, Italy and Germany may be inclined to load their savings into Switzerland, which could destabilise an already sluggish economy as it did when the same thing happened to the mark, lira and French franc during the recession in the early 1990s.

So the Swiss may have to keep their interest rates even lower than they are now. If in the end they decide they have to join the euro, the rates will have to go up, causing even more strain.

A decision to join the EU would require a referendum yielding a majority not just of the voters but also of the 26 cantons — and the sparsely populated rural cantons carry equal weight with cities such as Zurich and Geneva. When they voted on joining the looser European Economic Area in 1992 there was heavy cantonal vote against.

"Whether one likes it or not, Europe represents Swiss destiny. National unity can only be safeguarded by joining the European construction. That is a Copernican revolution in the Swiss political universe," says a recent book, The Swiss Illness.



The Swiss stand by their independence, but how much longer can they hold out against the encompassing European Union? PHOTOGRAPH UPPA

Why I love the euro

PETER TSCHOPP is an economics professor at the University of Geneva and Radical Party politician.



"We never thought there would be a single currency. Now there is a big chance we will have to join and I am in favour of that. Otherwise the Swiss franc will be very exposed.

This is an opportunity to open the whole issue of Switzerland and Europe. Within three years we will be carrying euros in one pocket and Swiss francs, or dollars, in the other."

Why I hate the euro

HANS KAUFMANN is chief economist at Julius Baer finance house in Zurich.



"We have already used up all our monetary weapons to keep the Swiss franc stable. The Swiss Bank could not intervene if the franc was pushed up in value again as a result of the euro. There would be damage to industry. I don't see how we can afford to join.

"But it is not just an economic problem. There is a problem of democracy. We would be a small country among heavyweights.

Swiss stance at a glance

Why doesn't Switzerland join the European Union?
The Swiss don't like joining anything, even international bodies based on their own soil. It only has observer status at the UN and rejected joining the European Economic Area — a free trade region wider than the EU — in 1992

Would joining the single currency damage its traditional independence?
Yes, because it would have to sign up to the EU first

Who's in favour and who's against?
Most of the main political parties are in favour. But about half of the country, especially in the conservative, German-speaking areas, is against joining the EU. French- and Italian-speakers are more positive but form only 20 and 10 per cent of the population respectively. The government has promised not to put it to the vote until 2002

But if the politicians want it, surely it will happen?
Not necessarily. There's a double lock referendum which means that both a majority of voters and the 26 cantons — each of which has an equal say — must agree.

How will it affect the mighty Swiss franc?
It would initially fall sharply as the single currency if they agreed to raise interest rates currently about 2 per cent — below even the German mark

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"When I went to the Gulf I was hoping that I would die there, actually. It's a ghastly thing to say but that rather romantic notion of dying in battle... So much nicer than all the tabloid mess one's had to endure." James Hewitt talks to Sabine Durrant

G2 p5



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صكرا من الاصل

With a year of Portuguese rule to go, **John Gittings** reports from the colony on high stakes for those living there

Macau countdown begins with killing

THE final countdown to the handover of Macau has begun with an ugly triad killing, the latest in a series of bombs and shootings.

It ushers in a difficult year ahead, as Portugal prepares to surrender sovereignty to China — after four and a half centuries — on december 20 1999.

A week ago, a lone gunman walked up to the quiet Caravela coffee bar just yards from the promenade and shot dead one prison warden and injured another. The gunman was almost certainly hired from the mainland.

The wardens were part of a team sent from Portugal to strengthen security at Macau prison, where the notorious triad gangster "Broken Tooth Koi" is being held. Yet the lesson of the recent triad violence is that Macau will be safer once the Portuguese have left.

"Their leaders are afraid of the Chinese," says independent legislator Ng Kuok Cheong. "They want to establish themselves before it's too late."

The recent execution in Guangzhou of the Hong Kong kidnapper "Big Spender" and several of his gang members sent a grim signal of Chinese resolve.

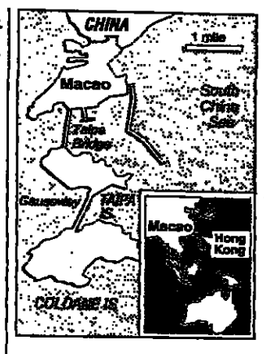
The Macau government has reacted with claims that there is an "overall drop" in the crime rate — although it admits that the incidence of arson, kidnapping and other serious offences has risen.

Macau presents a pleasant facade of Portuguese rule, with good restaurants and fine baroque churches. But many residents regard the government as out of touch and mainly concerned with a smooth escape from Portugal's last colonial possession.

Unlike Hong Kong under the British, little effort has been made to groom Macau Chinese for senior positions in the government. Last week China pointedly called for greater effort to "localise" the civil service. Ethnic Chinese make up 95 per cent of the population, but only seven out of 50 senior civil servants are local-born Chinese.

"Most officials here are ex-officers who have come to make money," says a Portuguese critic. "Macau is like a military encampment." This week the Hong Kong-based Far Eastern Economic Review highlights the "get-rich-quick deals" which abound.

"Many among the territory's Chinese population," says the Review, "are convinced that the departing Portuguese, as well as some mainland Chinese officials, are squeezing Macau dry."



The vast majority of Macau Chinese actively look forward to "returning to the motherland". This reflects Portugal's historical failure to co-opt more than the small minority of mixed descent — the approximately 10,000 so-called Macanese.

"The Macau Chinese are patriotic so they have never identified with the Portuguese. The Macau Chinese media is completely behind Beijing," says Mr Ng.

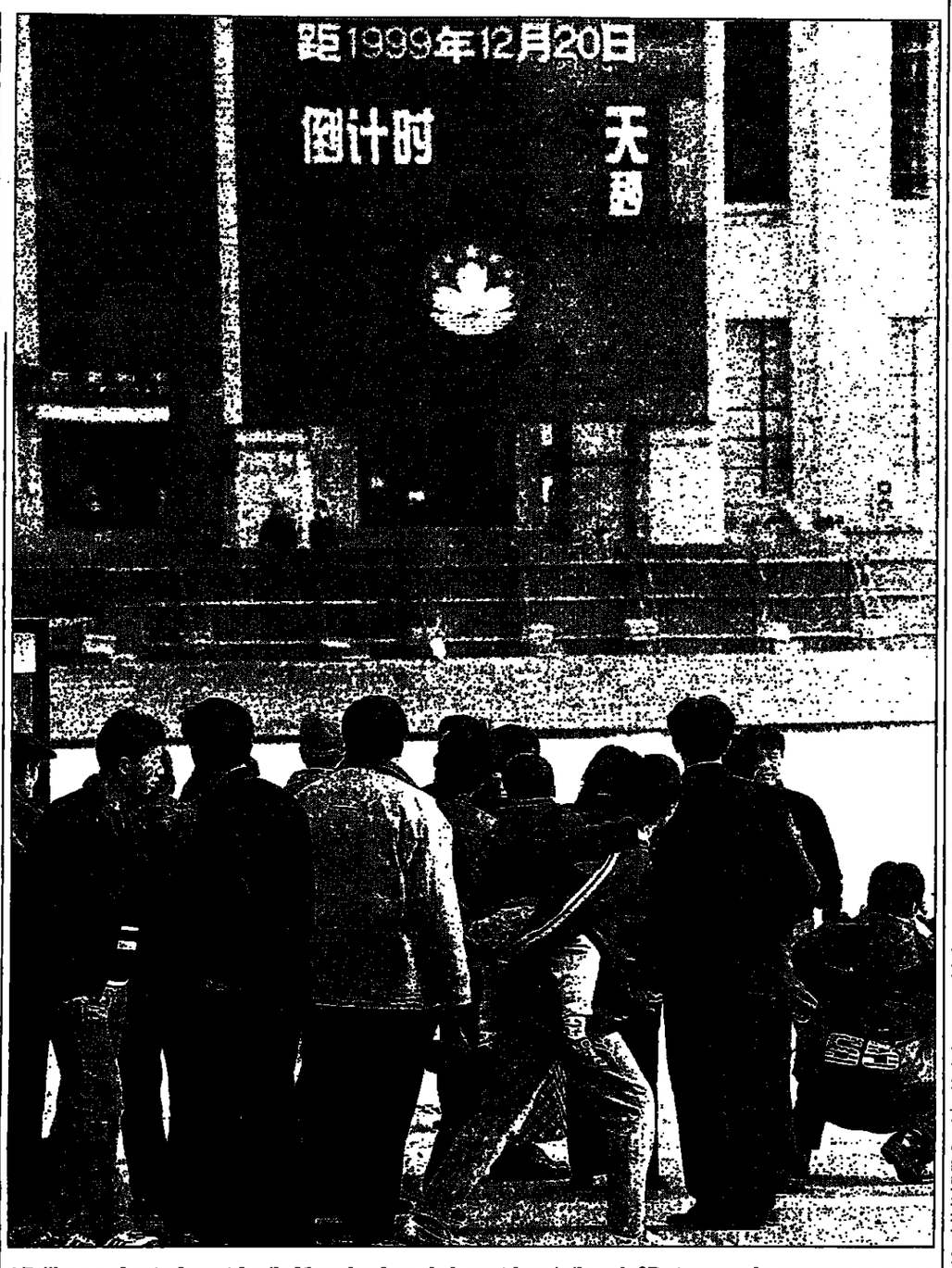
Amnesty International has said it will be campaigning in the coming year to highlight a lack of adequate safeguards for independence of the judiciary and some ambiguities about the application of international human rights treaties to Macau.

The main business of Macau remains the provision of gambling and related activities for citizens of Hong Kong and further afield. Much of the triad violence is generated by turf wars to control lucrative loan-shark operations in the casinos.

Stanley Ho, the Macau tycoon whose formal position is managing director of the gambling monopoly STDM (Macau Tourism and Entertainment Corporation), says that gambling is there to stay.

"China was pragmatic enough ... to spell out clearly that for historical reasons the gaming industry ... can carry on for another 50 years without change," he says.

Macau's new international airport is one of a number of areas of the colony which are underused. It handles 2 million passengers a year against a planned-for 5 million. Fewer than 10 of the 60 check-in desks are usually in operation. Most of the traffic is from Taiwan, ferrying islanders to mainland China, but if direct links between Taiwan and China are established then even this business will fall away.



A Beijing crowd yesterday watches the Macau handover clock count down to the end of Portuguese rule PHOTOGRAPH: GOH CHAI HIN

The Portuguese governor has described it as a "political airport" where normal calculations don't apply.

Like Hong Kong after it returned to China, Macau will enjoy the benefits of the policy of "one country, two systems".

The question is whether, freed from unimaginative colonial rule, Macau can develop a more successful system than those played on the gambling tables.



Liu Nianchun, who was freed on medical parole yesterday

Dissident exiled as another stands trial

John Gittings

China played the game of "one in and one out" yesterday, when it released a prominent dissident into exile in the United States, while preparing to put another on trial.

Liu Nianchun follows in the footsteps of fellow dissidents Wei Jingsheng and Wang Dan, both released into exile in the past year.

Mr Liu, aged 50, was released from a prison labour camp on medical parole on condition that he left the country. He faces certain re-arrest if he returns.

Human rights groups have decried the timing of his release as a "cynical" attempt to blunt criticism over the decision to put the veteran pro-democracy activist Xu Wenli on trial today.

Mr Liu was sentenced without trial under administration regulations — often used to deal with dissenters — in 1995 after drafting a petition calling for an official inquiry into the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre.

It was the third time he had been imprisoned in 17 years. His three year term was then extended, again without trial.

His brother Liu Qing, who now lives in New York, said that Mr Liu had been ill for two years before being given a medical examination last month.

His wife, Chu Hailian, gained international publicity in September when she was dragged away by security guards while trying to deliver a letter to the United Nations human rights chief, Mary Robinson, outside a Beijing hotel.

Mr Liu, his wife and their 11-year-old daughter will arrive in the US only hours before Xu Wenli goes on trial in Beijing on charges of subversion.

Mr Xu attracted foreign attention when he was briefly detained while Tony Blair visited Beijing in September. Mr Blair's entourage suggested that the British Prime Minister may have helped secure Mr Xu's release. If so, it did not help him for long.

Mr Xu's wife, He Xintong, said yesterday that the court had appointed a lawyer for her husband without leaving him time to prepare a defence.

On Thursday two other leading dissidents — like Mr Xu accused of trying to set up an alternative to the Communist Party — were tried elsewhere in China without being allowed proper legal representation.

The three week-long crackdown on a handful of would-be founders of the Chinese Democracy Party (CDP) does not suggest real concern that they might pose a political threat. However, it reinforces recent forceful statements by national leaders intended to define the limits of dissent.

On Friday President Jiang Zemin told a meeting, held to celebrate the 20th anniversary of China's economic reforms, that the current political system "must not be shaken, weakened or discarded at any time". He vowed to "nip in the bud" any subversive activities.

The US-based Human Rights in China group welcomed Mr Liu's release yesterday. But in a statement it added: "The Chinese government continues to play hostage politics with no true commitment to international human rights standards."

China is also concerned with the overall balance of relations with the US and other Western democracies. In spite of Beijing's opposition to US bombing in Iraq, it must also take into account longer-term trade and strategic shared interests.

Experience has shown that releasing one or two high-profile dissidents allows Western governments to claim that China is responding to human rights pressure.

News in brief

Israel sued over heart

THE family of a deceased Scottish tourist whose heart was removed and returned separately, claimed yesterday that Israeli authorities returned the wrong organ.

The family of Alistair Sinclair is suing Israel for one million shekels (£145,000) for removing his heart and thyroid for medical tests without their permission.

Sinclair was arrested in Israel in April on suspicion of smuggling drugs. Police say he committed suicide the next day. His family claims he was killed. — *AP, Tel Aviv.*

Kosovo truce falters

ETHNIC Albanians attacked a police patrol yesterday in central Kosovo, Serb sources said, raising tensions after an upsurge of violence which threatens the province's fragile ceasefire.

The Serb Media Centre said ethnic Albanian separatists opened fire on a police patrol along the province's main east-west road about 25 miles west of Pristina.

Police fired back, wounding two attackers. They and four others were captured, the media centre said. Tension was running high in the province because the rebel Kosovo Liberation Army was burying 36 guerrillas killed by Yugoslav border guards, and hundreds of Serbs were protesting against the killing of a local official. — *AP, Pristina.*

Jewish grave attacked

UNKNOWN assailants exploded a device at the German grave of the former chairman of the Central Council of Jews, destroying the memorial slab that covered Heinz Galinski's last resting place, police in Berlin said yesterday.

Police blocked off entry to the Jewish cemetery on Heer street in the Charlottenburg district to search for clues, after witnesses reported an explosion at the site on Saturday evening.

The German president, Roman Herzog, sent a telegram to Galinski's wife Ruth, in which he expressed his sadness and pain for himself and the Germans. The grave was attacked three months ago. — *AP, Berlin.*

Pupils expand protest

IGNORING pleas from the government, high school pupils vowed yesterday to step up their campaign to block roads and occupy school buildings around Greece.

Student representatives voted to expand blockades to main roads, continue school occupations and stage more rallies and rush-hour roadblocks of Athens' streets to protest against plans to replace university exams with continual assessment. — *AP, Athens.*

Extortionist targets trains

SECURITY has been tightened on the German railways after an extortionist suspected of carrying out three attacks on trains demanded 10 million marks (about £3 million), an interior ministry spokesman said yesterday.

Up to 400 border police will make checks on stretches of the railway and will be helped by the air force, he said.

In the most serious attack a goods train was derailed on Friday — *AP, Frankfurt.*

Israeli polls show public backing ex-army chief in fight for peace

Ilene Prusher in Jerusalem

WHILE the prime minister, Binyamin Netanyahu, looks for ways to keep his government afloat, Israelis have been focusing their attention on who might succeed him.

Israel's parliament votes today on whether to call new elections. Mr Netanyahu's cabinet yesterday backed his decision to freeze all moves to continue the peace process with the Palestinians until they fulfil a list of conditions.

Although the backing from his cabinet showed that he would probably survive a vote of no confidence in the Israeli parliament today, all analyses indicate that a majority of the 120 members will vote to hold early elections.

Centrist and leftwing Israelis have begun to debate who would present the greatest challenge to Mr Netanyahu: Ehud Barak, the leader of the opposition Labour party, or Amnon Lipkin-Shahak, a former soldier who has yet to decide on which party's ticket he would run.

Mr Netanyahu's move to solidify his rightwing support was seen as a last-minute effort to regain the support he has lost from hardliners opposed to trading Israeli-occupied land in the West Bank in return for peace and security guarantees from the Palestinians.

But a majority of members of parliament appeared to be willing to vote against Mr Netanyahu. They comprise a mix of leftwingers, moderates fed up with stagnation in the peace process, and ultra-nationalists who have developed both an ideological and personal disdain for him.

In all, 65 of the 120 members are expected to vote for elections. Observers believe Mr Netanyahu may persuade a few members to abstain — or convince nationalists that his demise is only likely to hasten the election of a prime minister who will take a much more conciliatory stance with the Palestinians.

Even if the bill for elections passes, it will still have to be sent to a parliamentary committee before it is given its second and third readings. In that time the resilient Mr Netanyahu may broker a deal.

"This is looking to be more dangerous than anything so far. We're still in the process, and he might by some miracle be able to defeat this," said Dr Reuven Hazan, a political scientist at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

"But it looks like this is the beginning of the end and the question is, how long is the finale?"

Even if the call for elections succeeds, it is unlikely they would take place before spring.

> There are fears that if both men run they may split the peace vote

The foremost deadline in Israeli minds appears to be May 4 — when the five-year interim period of the Oslo Accords is scheduled to end and Yasser Arafat has said he will declare a Palestinian state with or without a final peace agreement.

Another matter that could hold back elections for several months is that of the latest opinion polls. They show that General Lipkin-Shahak — who would have to sit through a 100-day waiting period after officially retiring from the army in order to run for office — is the favourite to beat Mr Netanyahu.

Gen Lipkin-Shahak has not yet announced that he will run but nor is he dispelling rumours that he will join the race.

Both challengers are protégés of Yitzak Rabin, the Labour prime minister assassinated at a peace rally in 1995, and there are fears that, were both men to run, they could split the peace vote, handing victory to Mr Netanyahu.

Tensions are developing between the two as Mr Barak has indicated he will not surrender his leadership of the Labour party to Gen Lipkin-Shahak, who is a Labour sympathiser but also has the option of running as the head of a newly-formed centrist party.

"I'll be happy if he [Shahak] joins us," Mr Barak said, "[but] I am the one who leads us."



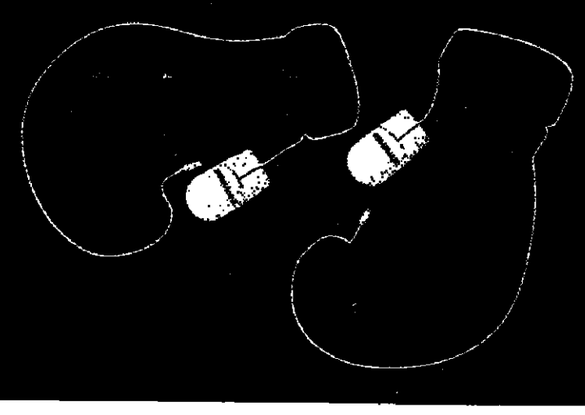
Front runner

LIEUTENANT-General Amnon Lipkin-Shahak (above) has never declared his intention to run for prime minister, but a recent poll showed him leading Binyamin Netanyahu as the people's choice by more than 15 points.

The general, aged 54, was appointed army chief of staff in 1995 by Yitzhak Rabin and helped with the Oslo Peace Accords as well as overseeing the transfer of most of the Gaza Strip and seven West Bank cities to Palestinian control.

During that time, the general expressed the need for Israel not to control the Palestinians. However, he has never outlined a platform or how he would negotiate a final settlement.

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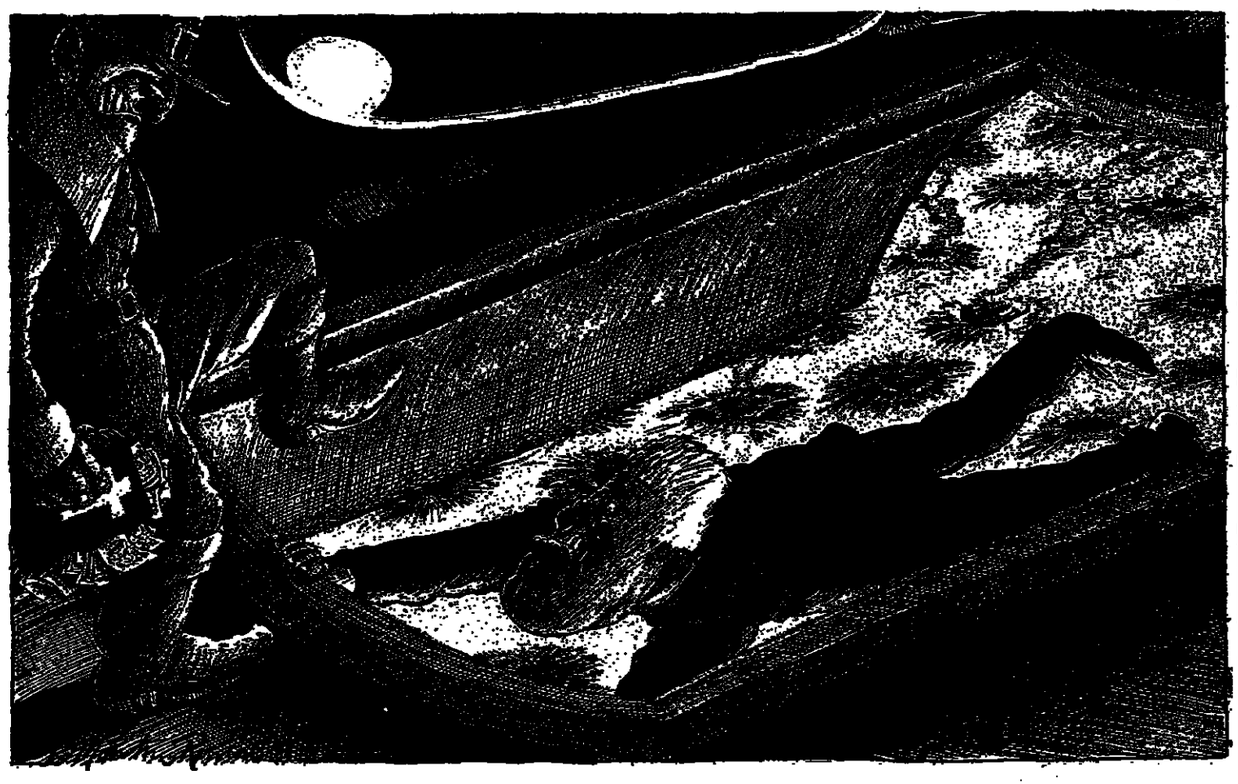
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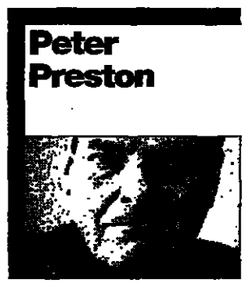
Comment

President impeached

Western sentiment is appalled at simultaneous warfare and arraignment in the US



To save this great country from the sectarians, Clinton must hold on



Peter Preston

THE VIEW from far beyond the Beltway is one of simple bemusement. What on earth do they think they're doing? The issue now isn't whether you approve of Bill Clinton or not, whether you'd welcome him as your son-in-law, but whether the hurdles of public life have been set lunatically high. The issue is Bob Livingston.

He was about to become the third most powerful man in the United States, the Speaker of the House of Representatives. But then, because marital strayings were the headlines of the moment, his own sidled into print — as they were bound to do if the focus was harsh enough. And he walked away from it all on the House floor. He threw in not merely the job he was destined for, but the job the people of Louisiana elected him to do.

The melodrama — ripe with unthinking folly — was challenging Clinton to do the same. The insanity was taking the narrow seam of sexual righteousness which has consumed the Republican Party and running it down through the ranks. In one deluded moment, Bob Livingston made infidelity a resigning offence.

In a Western world where as many marriages end in divorce as survive, that turns off the tap of available talent. It would have denied the White House to Roosevelt. Eisenhower and Kennedy for starters. It would have buried Livingston's predecessor, Newt Gingrich, before his political career opened for business. You don't need to guess at its baleful impact on candidates to come. The questions for George Bush Junior and the rest are forming in reporters' notebooks already. Let he who is absolutely without sin think of running: let everyone else go home and sit on their porch.

Was perjury the problem for Livingston? No: no court, no lies. Was abuse of power the problem? No: he hadn't got any yet to abuse. The problem, the only problem, was sex outside marriage. We may or may not condone that, but whatever we think it is part of human existence. The man who might have been Speaker has made it the bottom line of running for public office now.

Such sexual McCarthyism is the ultimate madness: the moment to pause and take stock. Why have the Republicans behaved as they have? Don't they read opinion polls? Can't they absorb the message of the worst mid-term election performance at an equivalent point in a Presidency since the second world war?

Obviously not. Public opinion doesn't matter when there are no elections for two years. The opinion that counts is the din from the Christian coalitionists who've always hated Clinton. They aren't the moral majority; they are the moral minority. But they lobby and they care. For them, the technicalities of the American law of perjury are beside the point. They saw a fornicator with liberal credentials they didn't like elected: they think they've got him now. Forgiveness does not feature in their lexicon. Once the Senate starts sitting, they'll be picking up the phone again.

The reasons for wanting Clinton to survive have thus changed in turn. He was a grubby, pathological fool. He took his own mad risks and, when they were exposed, his political nous deserted him. He lied to his nearest and (maybe) dearest. He cheated his staff and his friends. But there is still a line in the sand of his Presidency.

If Clinton is driven from office now, it will be because of his personal and private flaws — the flaws his wife and his daughter forgive him for. Livingston's departure makes that explicit. One extra-marital strike and you're out. That is a ludicrous rule of survival for a nation which neither lives by nor acknowledges such rules. It dictates, extrapolated, that their future chiefs shall not be people like them, but puritans wrapped in their own morality of self-regard.

THE PRESIDENT will not find it easy to resist: the momentum is not with him. He's manifestly tired and beleaguered. His staff are disillusioned, his lawyers impaled on the hook of having to trade legal definitions — because the Senate is a court — while Senators demand quite other down home language. His economic miracle may not last much longer. His four days of zapping Iraq have made him few friends.

Above all, he's trapped in the impossible bind of damnation if he does something and damnation if he doesn't. Was the Baghdad foray a cynical bit of dog wagging? How could it be if his chiefs of staff and disapproving defence secretary advised him to send the missiles in? If he'd disregarded their advice, it would have leaked in this Washington within days. Equally if he'd told them to start bombing — against their advice — he would have been hung out to dry. Tony Blair is a friend in need, not a poodle. Practicality dismisses cynicism.

But practicality will also sit uneasily with perception through the coming weeks. In media legend, he's a broken President. If he does nothing, then he'll be prey to a "fatal inertia". If he apologises again it will be too little, too late: if he utters no more regrets then he will be treating the American people with contempt. He lacks, in sum, the ability to rescue himself. He will need something more.

Back to that line in the sand. Inside the Beltway, the media feeds on itself and the politicians feed on it. The hunt is getting close to the fox. The 24-hour newscasters will be there, live and portentous, if he's torn to pieces. The Republicans, drunk on their own altar wine, show no sign of humility. The call is for Clinton to depart as the only means of "sparing the nation" from more of this ordeal.

But he cannot and should not depart. If he does, it will set the Livingston rule in stone. The fundamentalists will have their scalp — forerunner of many victories to come — and America will henceforth draw its leaders from the narrow sect who are part, but only part, of a great country.

The last issue, in sum, is what kind of nation the United States may become. That's a long way from seedy suckings in the Oval Office, from sex, lies and videotapes, but it is where we are now. Who will rally, of necessity, to the defence of the indefensible? This devil of an affair has become bigger than any of us.

Polly Toynbee's column and Endpiece will appear tomorrow

Bimbo bombings are the real crime

Barbara Ehrenreich



THE REPUBLICANS searched high and low - and then lower still - for some plausible excuse for impeachment. Ken Starr spent millions investigating Whitewater, Travelgate, Filegate, and even Vince Foster's suicide without uncovering a smoking gun or a smidgen of presidential DNA. Sadly, for both the dignity of the nation and the credibility of the impeachment process, the Republicans were left with the President's schoolboyish attempts to pretend that nothing happened with Monica, at least nothing resembling sex.

But for at least a year now, a perfectly impeachable "high crime and misdemeanour" has been staring us in the face: Clinton's capricious use of US military power to upgrade his image from molester of office help to Commander in Chief. Consider the timing of this year's threatened and actual military strikes:

● February 1998, directly following January revelations about his affair with Monica Lewinsky, Clinton readies the US military for an attack on Iraq, which is narrowly averted by the intervention of UN Secretary General Kofi Annan.

● August 1998, on the same day Ken Starr recalled Monica Lewinsky to testify to the grand jury, and days after his own dodgy testimony, Clinton launches air strikes against Sudan and Afghanistan (accidentally hitting Pakistan in the process). The strikes were justified by alleged links between Afghani-based Saudi terrorist Osama bin-Ladn and the bombings of US embassies in Africa, although no convincing evidence was adduced to show that the Sudan target was anything other than a pharmaceutical factory.

● November 1998, the weekend before Congress opens impeachment hearings, Clinton schedules a fresh bombing campaign against Iraq but, in a surprise case of *bellum interruptus*, changes his mind.

● December 1998, on the eve of the congressional vote to impeach, Clinton begins the re-bombing of Iraq. This time he circumvents the UN entirely by beginning the attack *even as* the Security Council meets to discuss the UNSCOM report on weapons inspections — which report, it should be mentioned, admitted that the Iraqis had been co-operative at a "majority" of sites. Two hours after the impeachment vote, the bombing suddenly ceases.

> He deserves impeachment for committing casual carnage

Now the US Constitution, which impeachment hawk Representative Tom DeLay claims to carry, in miniature, close to his heart at all times, says nothing about fellatio or fellatio-related fibbing. It does, however, make perfectly clear, in Article 1, Section 8, that only Congress has "the power to declare war" — a provision designed precisely to prevent a president's use of the public arsenal to achieve personal or spiteful ends. On the basis of that and the UN charter, which prohibits the use of force by one nation against another without the authorisation of the Security Council, legal scholars Francis Boyle and Jules Lobel maintain that Clinton indeed deserves impeachment — not for casual sex but for what could be argued is equally casual carnage.

Yet, bizarrely, Congress persisted in its effort to impeach the President on manifestly trivial grounds, pausing only to declare its fervent bipartisan support for the troops. Never mind that scores of Iraqi civilians were dying, or that among the collateral damage from the Republicans' sexual purity crusade were veteran adulterers — Hyde and Livingston — on their own side of the aisle. Even those House members who profess to disbelieve the President when he offers the time of day swallowed his bombing rationales like candy. The wagging dog has become America's elephant in the living room — the presence that almost everyone is too polite to mention.

Call it blood magic — the mysterious power of war to mobilise the emotions at the expense of the most elementary logic. Mindful of its drug-like effects, opportunistic heads of state have spent the last two decades refashioning war into a public relations device: Thatcher in the Falklands, Milosevic in Bosnia, Bush in Iraq. In each case, a leader enfeebled by low popularity and a faltering economy was able to boost his or her ratings to god-like levels, at least temporarily, by staging a war. Ancient rulers cemented their power by presiding over public rites of blood sacrifice, and American governors seek a similar effect by demonstrating their enthusiasm for capital punishment. Recall, for example, candidate Clinton's effort to distract from Gennifer Flowers' revelations with his highly publicised 1992 execution of a severely retarded Arkansas man.

So the impeachment process continues for all the wrong reasons. As the tawdry spectacle unfolds in the Senate, the American people will squeal in self-pity, the Iraqis will bury their dead, and residents of designated target states everywhere — from Cuba to North Korea — will be well advised to dig their bomb shelters a little bit deeper.

Barbara Ehrenreich is the author of Blood Rites: Origins and History of the Passions of War (Virago)

Senate must rescue the US constitution

Jonathan Freedland in Washington DC

THE WASHINGTON Monument, that sharp needle that pops out of the skyline of America's capital, is not looking so good just now. It's clad in scaffolding from top to bottom, necessary for some mid-winter repairs. And it makes an unsettling sight.

For one thing, it could be a cartoonist's depiction of Washington's 1998 obsession with sex. The bolt-upright monument has always had a phallic provenance; now it looks like it's sheathed in a condom. But there's a less crude reading. The sight of a national landmark propped up by poles and planks captures the current mood of the city: Washington is falling down.

For in these dying days of 1998, the American capital has felt like a place in drastic trouble. At war with Iraq, at war with its President and at odds with the country, it has begun to consume its own. Washington has become the town that ate itself.

The first victim is, of course, the President, impeached on Saturday. Republicans were effective on the floor of the House that day, arguing that Bill Clinton is guilty not of a sin, but a crime, not a private offence but a public one. He lied *under oath*. There is some logic to that case and Democrats may struggle to repel it in the Senate, where a trial is due to be held next month — barring the kind of cross-party deal being discussed behind the scenes yesterday. Still, logic can be deceptive.

For once the premise of an argument has been accepted, then all kinds of apparently logical consequences can flow, even those that are plainly absurd and dangerous. It happened when Joe McCarthy was allowed to make mere belief in communism a crime, and therefore to stamp out anything, and anyone, even vaguely touched by it. Zippergate began with a different premise — that probing into the sexual lives of politicians is legitimate — so that Mr Clinton's failure to fall into line became an impeachable high crime. When the cry came that private lives should be off-limits, no one listened. It was too late.

And now they are paying the price. President Clinton had to share yesterday's headlines with Congressman Bob Livingston's resignation. After an investigation by Hustler magazine, he was forced to admit to a string of extra-marital affairs and he resigned rather than defend himself.

Democrats did not cheer his departure. "It is a surrender to a developing sexual McCarthyism," cried New York's Jerrold Nadler. "Are we going to have a new test if someone wants to run for public office: Are you now or have you ever been an adulterer?" The Democratic leader in the House put it even better. In a stirring, career-defining speech, Richard Gephardt implored his colleagues to put aside "the politics of slash-and-burn," lest the dark forces of sexual inquisition consume America's political system. "Our founding fathers created a system of government of men, not of angels." If we keep demanding standards of morality unobtainable by mere mortals," he said, "we will see our seats of government lay empty."

This is a dire warning, and an urgent one. The US has now impeached a President for only the second time in its history for an act that arose from an embarrassing, paltry, unconsummated and consensual fling. This same episode has also cost the Republicans two leaders: Mr Livingston and Newt Gingrich, who resigned after the poor Republican performance at last month's Zippergate elections.

THREE other Republicans have been outed as adulterers, partly thanks to the enterprising work of Larry Flynt, the publisher of Hustler magazine, who is offering cash-for-dirt on any politician who hypocritically espouses family values. Hustler is reportedly set to pour another bucket of slime on a Republican poll this week.

So reputations are destroyed, a presidency indelibly stained by what one observer called "the DNA of impeachment", and a witch-hunt is in full swing. A longer-range worry is what happens with the next president, perhaps a Republican. Won't the Democrats be hungry for revenge? Won't impeachment, once the nuclear-button of American politics, become not a last resort, but a procedure?

How will Washington stop the insanity which, polls show, continues to appall the rest of America? That, along with the fate of Bill Clinton, is now in the hands of the 100 members of the US Senate. They can save him — and perhaps even themselves.



Empty strikes

Ronald Steel

PRESIDENT Clinton's decision to bomb Iraq, although understandable as an expression of exasperation with Saddam Hussein's deceptions, is likely to cause more problems than it solves.

In effect it solves nothing. The Clinton Administration did not claim that the bombing would remove Saddam from power, or even that it would seriously reduce his ability to produce chemical or biological weapons. Nor does anyone suggest that this attack will induce him to comply with future demands of UN weapons inspectors.

So it would seem the attack was intended to do little more than demonstrate that the patience of the US Government had been worn out and that its frustration demanded a response.

A military operation inspired by such emotion and seeking such modest objectives can be justified only if the cost is very low. But that is far from the case here. Indeed, the political fallout is likely to be more beneficial to Saddam than to the US.

The bombing means the end of the Unscom inspection programme. For all the roadblocks the Iraqis put in its way, Unscom had considerable success over its seven years. Indeed, one reason President Clinton gave for calling off last month's scheduled air strikes was that the action would have meant the end of Unscom.

"We would then have no oversight, no insight, no involvement in what is going on in Iraq," he said at the time. Now, apparently, that doesn't matter.

With the loss of the inspections, the US will be locked into a huge military presence in the Persian Gulf for years. Not only will this cost billions and embroil the US even deeper into the convoluted politics of the region, but it will also strain links with friendly Arab regimes.

Leaders of Saudi Arabia and the Gulf Emirates may hate Saddam, but they fear being accused by their own people — whose support of Iraq in this conflict is clear - of being lackeys of the US. Not a single Arab state that supported the Gulf War including Kuwait, has openly backed this raid. Egypt, Syria and even the United Arab Emirates have opposed it.

In addition, the principal restraint keeping Saddam in check — economic sanctions — has been seriously compromised. Although Russia and France have pushed hard to end sanctions, they have for the most part observed them, which has limited Iraq's military strength.

> The fallout of the bombing is likely to be beneficial to Saddam Hussein

Sanctions were imposed not by the US but by the Security Council. We have consistently defended our actions against Iran as justified by UN resolutions. But the current attack does not have that authorisation, and Russia and China have denounced it. If the US can bomb Iraq without authorisation, then why won't other countries feel free to buy its oil and sell it goods?

The attack also endangers our relations with Security Council members on other issues. For example, in denouncing the attack, the Russians declared that they were shelving plans to ratify Start II — an arms reduction treaty the US very much wants.

Yes, Saddam is a menace to his own people and the entire Middle East. There is a case to be made for unilateral American military action — if we have the support of our partners and the action is on a scale to be truly effective.

But Desert Fox (with its curious reference to a Nazi field marshal) does not meet that standard. A successful operation of this sort requires a certain degree of cleverness and hypocrisy. We have not been clever enough to convince our allies, other than Britain, that it is in their best interest. Nor do we have the support of the Security Council, a fig leaf that has been highly useful in justifying American-led interventions from the Korean War to the Gulf war.

By declaring that the US seeks to depose Saddam and pave the way for a new Iraqi government, President Clinton went far beyond his UN mandate, as Secretary General Kofi Annan reminded him. Because the Administration made no serious pretence to play by UN rules, if only for show, it will be harder in the future for the US to claim that its unilateral actions are taken on behalf of the world community.

Hypocrisy, which La Rochefoucauld called the tribute vice pays to virtue, has an honored place in diplomacy, as it does in politics. This operation lacks the virtue of its vices.

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'Riefenstahl is now the world's most prominent unrepentant Nazi'
Brian Winston, Letters

What's been achieved?

And what happens now?

THE PRIME Minister urges us to feel "safer". The bombing has stopped and Saddam is pronounced weakened. It's a proposition that has literally to be true, even if only a fraction of the British and American bombs and missiles hit their targets. This is the "degradation" promised last Wednesday, which by official reports will take years to replace.

But who really feels safer? It's not just the person in the street's questions about the relative invulnerability of chemical and biological weapons. Iraqi civilians are hardly more secure, facing as they do both intensified sanctions together with (no paradox according to the Foreign Secretary) new efforts to deliver humanitarian aid. How many more will have to die, either at Saddam's hands or in pursuit of a strategy that comes mighty close to making a desert and calling it peace? The anxiety is global, too. During the past week the pent uncertainties of the post-Cold War world have exploded along with bombs in Baghdad, unleashing profound doubts about the American order that has replaced bi-polar freeze. For some it has been the way in which the language of international legality has been used when what we are witnessing is the assertion of the interests of the United States, interests with which we and the Russians and Chinese are of course more or less complicit. American self-absorption makes things worse. Here is a super power projecting military force half way around the globe in a fit of absence of mind. Some world order, when Russian diplomacy consists in large measure of petulance and Europe, not for the first time, is characterised by confusion and non-communication. As for the United Nations, cynosure still of so many hopes, Secretary General Kofi Annan has lost authority. Unscom's personnel and mission are clouded; it hardly helps for the Government to start insinuating there wasn't much Unscom could tell us that signals intelligence and remote sensing can't. As for the Security Council, it is hard to see if and when it can function again as an embryonic world governing body. It seems oddly late in the game for the prime minister to talk about achieving a broad consensus in it. The prevailing sense of insecurity has been compounded by the war's disproportions. If the end game is replacing Saddam, the connection between bombs and the convoluted politics of that transition is less obvious. Yesterday Foreign and Defence Secretaries were on parade. Shouldn't the Chancellor have been out front too. How much extra money (at what cost to the Government's domestic commitments) will this "advanced" role for the United Kingdom in the Gulf really amount to. Did the 1998 defence review really prepare British taxpayers to assume global policeman's responsibilities?

Money is not the only cost of Operation Desert Fox. The Foreign Secretary talks of building new partnerships, after the event. It's not to be a little Englander to point out that the commercial and security interests of other countries are as engaged with the Middle East and the Gulf and the fact that Britain was the colonial power on the Euphrates ought to be the reason for more not less involvement by other powers. Tony Blair talks of the fallacy of saying, if you can't remove Saddam then there is nothing to be done. But what's to be done must involve much more than military action. One reason why President Clinton's infirmity is so unfortunate is that there is now even less likelihood of defining security in the Middle East in the only way that makes long-term sense, that is by including Israel as part author of the disequilibrium and part-solution: for President Clinton in one and the same week to appear at Gaza, offering something like a new start and then to resort to unilateral action in another Arab state is only to register the scale of the lost opportunity.

Tony Blair has lately worn the clothes of leadership with some style, carefully avoiding Thatcherite triumphalism. But the glamorous, cameras-outside-Number-Ten-phase is ending. He has a new battle to fight — to convince. Britain is committing to a long-term anomalous forward-offensive role. What is the point?

Don't impeach him

The issue is proportionality

BILL Clinton, the first president this century to be impeached by Congress, has promised to fight on until "the last hour of the last day" of his term. Is he right to resist the Republican onslaught? Absolutely. A Senate trial may paralyse an already benumbed and debilitated White House, but Republican hardliners are posing a far greater constitutional threat to the US than the discredited incumbent. Infidelity is not an impeachable offence. Indeed, as yet another congressional figure, speaker-elect Bob Livingstone, resigned following revelations of his infidelity, even the man who presided over the house judiciary committee's impeachment hearings, Henry Hyde, somewhat belatedly warned members not to confuse private acts with "the conduct of public office". Precisely, but why did it take the exposure of sins within Republican ranks to establish this fundamental political principle? There is indeed a sexual McCarthyism developing in America which is as insidious and, in its way, as damaging as the witchhunt for communists four decades ago.

Clinton has in many ways been a serious disappointment. The hopes he engendered at the beginning of his first term for a fairer society evaporated as he embraced the Republican agenda to win his second term. But this too is not an impeachable offence. Future historians will undoubtedly heap condemnation on his head, but they will save their most serious censure for a Republican majority in the lower house, which used its sheer numbers to push through its partisan impeachment vote. Clinton has, of course, dissembled and lied. The question is one of proportionality: should he be impeached as president or prosecuted for perjury once he has left office? His offences surely fall short of the "high crimes and misdemeanours" required for an impeachment. Censure him now and prosecute him later, by all means, but the Senate must step back from the grave step of impeachment.

Letters to the Editor

Councillors taking the rise

I CANNOT believe that Westminster Council is proposing to make payments to those involved in the "homes for votes" scandal (Council shelves pay-offs, December 18). I was made redundant by the council in 1988 and accepted the terms then offered — only to be told five years later that a mistake had been made and my pension was reduced by over £1,000 a year. The compensation I was offered, after long negotiations by Unison, was somewhat less than the £165,000 you report being offered to Barry Legg or the £1 million put aside for Shirley Porter.
Nova Atkinson.
Woking.

WHEN people criticise the rise in the BBC licence fee (News in brief, December 16) they should also consider the happily accepted profit margins enjoyed by the consumer industries that buy advertising time in private-sector broadcasting; by comparison, £100 per annum for the BBC's services offers exemplary value for money compared to the amounts accrued from us by the chiefs of the major financial investors involved in independent television.
Julian Firth.
London.

WHAT were your readers supposed to understand by the reference in your leader (December 19) to "the Germanic notion" of a "law of nations"? The German for "international law", is "volkerrecht", a straight translation of the long established term "jus gentium", or as it appears in that classic text by the late J L Brierley, The Law of Nations. Charitably, one might judge your remark unworthy of your newspaper.
D J Bentley.
London.

SO association with an organisation which seeks to advance the cause of human rights law is regarded as a form of bias on the part of a judge (Pinochet ruling set aside by Lords, December 18). Remarkable given the attitude which has been taken by the judiciary towards Freemasonry.
Dr Trevor Curnow.
Lancaster.

Battle rages over Iraq

HOW do we know what really happened in Iraq? We got an official account from the governments of Britain and the United States. But they were the attackers and concerned to justify their aggression. We got journalists' accounts from Baghdad. But — as they themselves rightly pointed out — they were under Iraqi control and allowed to see only what the Iraqi government wanted them to see. Since our only two sources were therefore tainted, Operation Desert Fox looks like qualifying as the most poorly-reported war since 1914-18.
Phillip Knightley.
London.

IF Kofi Annan has one iota of self-respect, he should resign his post as UN Secretary General. It is not sufficient for him just to describe the illegal military action taken by the US and Britain against Iraq as a sad day for the UN. For four days he sat tight-lipped while bombs and missiles rained on Iraq. It is now clear why Western superpowers favour candidates from the developing world to fill the post of UN Secretary General. They are easily bypassed and seem to ignore insults while clinging to the trappings of office.

Even someone like Richard Butler found it easy to sideline Annan and to confer with US representatives at the UN instead, when it come to the withdrawal of the Unscom inspectors from Baghdad. He obviously knows where the real power lies. In the current world climate, the UN is in urgent need of reform in order to regain its credibility. In its present form we have to ask whether such an impotent and easily manipulated organisation is worth retaining.
Dr Peter Kandela.
Staines, Middx.

YOUR correspondent Richard Tosswill (December 19) makes the highly pertinent observation that numerous letters have objected to our air strikes, but virtually all fail to propose a credible alternative. Mr Tosswill claims that some action is called for and what should that be? Let me suggest a less damaging alternative. Do nothing. There is no obvious reaction to the infuriating dilemmas as presently posed by Saddam. But, the dilemmas are (for those other than the Iraqi population) merely infuriating. Demands for action simply because Saddam's regime is deceitful and infuriating is a prescription for disaster — and Britain is now compounding, in the most horrible fashion, the misery already imposed on the Iraqis by their leader and by UN sanctions. A do nothing policy does not appear heroic, but the Government's and your correspondent's mantra that some action is called for is a simplistic and dangerous one — just ask the civilians who are having tons of explosive poured on them by the hubristic and gung-ho politicians.
Dr Gerald de Lacey.
London.

THE left of the Labour Party never miss an opportunity to criticise their government. Given that there is general agreement that Iraq possesses weapons of mass destruction, they offer no constructive alternative to the way in which the Government has acted; the left haven't said what they would do. Surely even they don't believe you can negotiate with such an evil dictator? Perhaps they can tell us why Saddam is stockpiling weapons if it's not to use them in the future. After all he's killed and maimed innocent people in the past in his own country and in Kuwait.
Eric Mandel.
Malmesbury, Wiltshire.

MY concern is the attitude of the Iraqi population. I am German-born and remember well enough from the second world war how, under the perception of foreign aggression and in isolation, the people rally round their leader, because he is all they have got. Military action against a nation won't bring the fall of their leader any nearer. Anyway, how can the US and UK governments take it upon themselves to single out one cruel, treacherous and power-hungry leader before the many others whose deeds make no nicer reading than Saddam's?
Marianne Peters.
Manchester.

BISHOP Richard Harries in his Thought for the Day message to the nation (Radio 4, December 18.) updates the Just War theory with the doctrine of "moral necessity". The real problem about this episcopal blessing of the Iraqi bombings by the UK and US is that it doesn't address at all the "moral necessities" of what is going to happen now the present "activity" has ceased. Unscom's chapter has ended with the likelihood of the Iraqi leadership problem still being unsolved — what next?

The moral support and encouragement of the Iraqi opposition parties should be our prime concern.
Canon David Partridge.
Clergy Against Nuclear Arms.

ONCE there was a quaint, old fashioned political theory called balance of power. With the collapse of the Soviet Union what is to be done now to restrain the military juggernaut that America has become?

The UN Secretary is insulted; the Security Council treated with contempt. China and Russia protest in vai . The Clinton-Blair alliance is suffocatingly smug and repressive in its complacency.
Don Feasey.
Manchester.

MARTIN Bell's rhetorical question as to who appointed us and the United States to act as the world's deputy and chief sheriffs (I'd shoot the sheriff and his deputy too, December 19) is inapt.

The bombing of Iraq was a grim necessity precisely because no sheriffs exist; there is no supranational organisation that exercises supreme and acknowledged sovereignty among states. It is, moreover, undesirable that any such authority should exist, for democracy is strongest when it embodies local tradition and custom.

In an anarchic world order, the United Nations acts as an international — not supranational — body that can authorise its members to use force, but does not use force itself. Iraq has demonstrably violated UN Security Council resolutions and betrayed the agreement that Mr Bell's friend, Kofi Annan, had brokered.
Oliver Kamm.
London.



Straw is wrong on terrorism law

THE new proposals by the Government to extend the remit of the terrorism laws (Straw broadens law against terrorism, December 18) have a number of dangerous consequences. One of these is the government suggestion that the law on "proscription" might be extended beyond terrorism relating to Northern Ireland. Under the Prevention of Terrorism Act it is a criminal offence to be a member of certain organisations that have been proscribed by the Government. Liberty believes that only actions should be subject to criminal sanctions and imprisonment, not mere indications of support or involvement in political organisations: freedom of expression and assembly are too important in any democratic society to be eroded in this way. Under the general law it is already a criminal offence to aid and abet another to commit an offence.

It is notoriously difficult for the police to obtain evidence of membership of proscribed organisations because such organisations rarely have membership lists. When it rushed through more terrorism legislation in the summer, the Government "solved" this problem by ensuring that the police no longer need any evidence to convict individuals of this offence. The mere opinion of a police officer combined with a refusal to answer police questions is now sufficient. This is a significant departure from our traditional criminal justice system.

The idea that this law should be extended is shocking. There is a danger that it will make criminals of those who campaign for democracy or human rights abroad. There is also a risk that animal rights or anti-roads campaigners will commit a crime merely by associating with members of a group which the Home Secretary has proscribed.
John Wadham.
Director, Liberty.

Liberal attack

SADLY, it is not the first time that Nobel Laureate Rigoberta Menchú has come under attack in the liberal press (Writer of wrongs, G2, December 16). You ignored two fundamental points.

Rigoberta Menchú did not receive the Nobel Prize for her book. She spent many years in exile working for peace in Guatemala and for indigenous rights worldwide. Your readers should be aware of Philip Stoll's work Between Two Armies in which he used a similar technique of interviews to justify the theses that the guerrilla movement in Guatemala was as responsible for the Mayan genocide of the early 1990s as the Guatemalan army.

These interviews were with the people who had stayed in the Guatemalan villages, ignoring those who had gone into exile or the fact that a different opinion might have been given to the tens of thousands who were killed.

We should all be wary of the use of anthropology to promote a rather skewed ideological vision of the Guatamalan tragedy.
Giampiero Alhadeff.
Secretary general, Solidar, Belgium.

Leni Riefenstahl continues to be a focus of controversy

THE point of Leni Riefenstahl is a simple one — either you have a taste for fascist aesthetics or you don't (Letters, December 19). It pains me to note that Kevin Brownlow, easily one of cinema's greatest historians, apparently has such a taste and is prepared to defend the indefensible in consequence.

Riefenstahl's Tiefland, to which he refers, was made using Romany extras from a holding camp in Austria who were all returned to the concentration camp system after filming. Most of them did not survive. This sort of incident constitutes the case for her Nazi complicity.

But what is equally important is that Tiefland is also one of the worst movies ever made, beyond camp in its turgidity. Its quality alone, even without the evil that lurks behind it, is quite enough to justify the end of her career as a film director. But she should never have worked as a director at all. All this rubbish about her genius really ought to stop. Multiple cameras on the major documentaries reduce her "auteurist" claims to editing, and there we find that the concept of "endless repetition" takes on a new meaning. In Triumph Of The Will, for example, 17 minutes of march past is followed by umpteen minutes of another march past.

But don't worry, the endless speeches covertly justifying Hitler's "Night of the Long Knives", when the SA leadership was destroyed, are yet to come. And then there's going to be lots more marching. Of course, pointing a camera at hundreds of thousands of men in close formation yields images fascinating to the fascist in all of us; but from the film-making point of view it really isn't that hard. In fact, how could you fail? Although she does come close because of her complete inability to pace her material. Riefenstahl was never a member of the Nazi Party. But that is because Goebbels' preference was for all artists to pretend to independence.

The notion that she in any way resisted the regime is ludicrous. She is now the world's most prominent unrepentant Nazi, a focus for far right-wing enthusiasms. Unlike Ingmar Bergman (whom Brownlow cites), she has never disclaimed her connection with Hitler. On the contrary. It is distressing to find Kevin Brownlow in the company of her apologist.
Prof Brian Winston.
School of Communications
Westminster University

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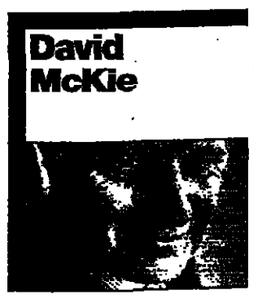
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CHINA	27	109	75%	SPAIN	11	36	69%
SAUDI ARABIA	38	102	63%	USA	5	24	79%
ISRAEL	10	79	87%	CANADA	6	24	75%
GERMANY	6	29	79%	AUSTRALIA	7	49	86%
SOUTH AFRICA	28	80	65%	NEW ZEALAND	8	49	84%
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Royal stitch-up



RIGHT-THINKING people must all be greatly relieved that the future of the House of Lords is to be settled not by the machinations of power-hungry politicians but by one of those disinterested colloquies of the great and the good, a royal commission. Where politicians are by nature self-serving, royal commissions are elevated and detached. What purer proof can you find than the fact that Margaret Thatcher did not appoint a single royal commission, for fear that one might come up with answers she did not like? So out of the process now announced is bound to come the best devisable blueprint for a 21st-century second chamber.

Perhaps.

When you look at the record of royal commissions and their slightly less eminent cousins, departmental commissions of inquiry, a rather less spotless pattern emerges. Some such inquiries — particularly under Harold Wilson, who used them a lot — were clearly contrived to produce the answers which ministers had already arrived at. Wilson set up the Fulton committee on the civil service and gave it 12 members, but its composition was probably best described as Norman (later Lord) Crowther Hunt and 11 others.

Hunt was a Wilson confidant; he was the only full-time member of the team; he, along with the secretary, wrote the report. Three years later Richard Crossman set up a committee on one-parent families under a lawyer called Morris Finer who he thought would swiftly arrive at the "obvious" answer — ie the one he favoured himself. Soon Crossman began to complain about the time Finer was taking. The inquiry lasted almost five years and by the time it reported Crossman was dead.

Not every attempt to do this succeeds. Margaret Thatcher set up a departmental committee on the BBC, entrusting the chairmanship to a staunch free-marketeer. When its membership was announced, one Thatcherite backbencher so far forgot himself as to proclaim in the House that the choice of this chairman ensured it would reach the correct solution: ie broadcasting would be Thatcherised. But it didn't. More recently the Banham Commission on local government was vigorously pointed towards the abolition of county councils and a system of unitary authorities. But Sir John was also told to consult public opinion, which turned out not to like this idea. In the end, nearly all the counties survived.

OTHER commissions seem genuinely to have been put there to resolve knotty issues that politics could not settle. The Roskill Commission on the third London airport, following the logic of its evidence, favoured an inland site at Cublington, Bucks, and rejected a dashing plan to site it on Maplin Sands on the Essex coast. Roskill had earlier targeted three inland sites — the others were at Nuthampstead, Herts, and Thurleigh, Beds. All would have blighted traditional Conservative country. One day, a senior government minister was preparing to open a golf course in one of the stricken areas when one of the local MPs halted him in mid-swing. "You realise," he said, "that if you build the third airport here, all of this will be lost?" The statesman lowered his club. "Won't happen," he confided. "Too many marginal seats at stake." The Conservatives rejected Roskill and went for an airport on Maplin Sands, where marginal seats would be less of a problem since half of the threatened area would be under the sea.

That is the trouble with politically innocent commissions. What you get when you try to build something elevated and detached is too often a castle in the air.

The Jenkins committee on voting reform which was charged with selecting the best alternative system to First Past the Post was much more grubbily pragmatic. It tailored its recommendations to the known proclivities of the Labour and Liberal Democrat leaderships and to what might be got through the Commons. It's a sign of the sedation of the British political system since Blair that the way the Jenkins process evolved hasn't been more complained about.

So perhaps one should not dismiss out of hand a complaint in last Wednesday's Daily Telegraph from the former Conservative leader in the Lords, Lord Cranborne, that Tony Blair favoured an upper chamber which was four-fifths nominated, and the royal commission he'd promised might be tilted towards that solution. I hope that his assessment of Blair's aspirations, for which Cranborne provided no evidence, is a monstrous calumny.

On the other hand, he has just been engaged in all those clandestine contacts which led to the deal that caused William Hague to sack him, and he must have heard a thing or two there. At the very least, this needs watching. You can't be too careful: such things have happened before.

Sir Alan Hodgkin

The Nobel art of science

Sir Alan Hodgkin, who has died aged 84, was a scientist of unusual breadth, a Nobel Laureate in physiology and medicine, a physicist and biochemist, and an innovator in the electronics of measurement. As a quietly influential Master of Trinity College, Cambridge, as president of the Royal Society and, for 13 years, as Chancellor of the University of Leicester, he was also among the most effective scientific administrators of our time.

Tall, reticent, profound, exacting yet good humoured, still handsome and distinctly patrician even in old age, he was warmed by a touch of romanticism, by the full breadth of culture, and by true imagination. He detested humbug, pretence and ritual, yet was always polite, even in extreme circumstances and even to investigative journalists. He expressed both his Quaker upbringing and the influence of his family, one of the most notable in Britain for its personalities, scholarship and mild eccentricity.

Sir Alan shared the 1963 Nobel Prize with his one-time student, collaborator and lifetime friend Andrew Huxley. Between them, they unravelled the complex sub-millisecond electro-chemistry underlying the transmission of impulses along neural fibres. That a share of the prize also went to the Australian physiologist John Eccles, who, in the 1930s, had strongly opposed new theories, was seen by some scientists as a matter of controversy.

Two fundamental issues were involved. Before the 1930s the nervous system was regarded as a hard-wired network, in which neural pulses were entirely electrical, travelling along fibres and across neural junctions, the synapses, as in a conductor.

In the 1930s, against the opposition of Eccles, among others, Henry Dale and his colleagues demonstrated that transmission across the synapses is chemical (the release of acetylcholine). As a post-graduate student Sir Alan recalled hearing this issue debated energetically at Cambridge by Dale and Eccles and, in the end, coming down firmly on Dale's side. "Eccles," he wrote later, "put up a good defence; but acetylcholine won the day." This was a controversy, however, in which Hodgkin never became involved, for his work was concerned with neural axons, not synapses. In any case the Cambridge of the early 1930s, when he was a student, seethed with scientific ideas and controversies. This was the era of Rutherford, Eddington, Hardy, J J Thompson (Master of Trinity), Gowland Hopkins, Wittgenstein, Adrian, Needham and many others of the front rank. It is striking that, even in this context, Hodgkin was a brilliant student, one who loved Cambridge as intensely as he had disliked much of his early schooling. It seems, in retrospect, almost inevitable that decades later, and amid international acclaim, he would be able to so arrange his life as to become Master of Trinity.

Scholarship was the family grail. Dorothy Crowfoot Hodgkin, who won the Physics Nobel Prize in 1964 for her x-ray diffraction studies of proteins, was his cousin. His grandfather was Thomas Hodgkin, a leading historian during the 19th century and a man who loved Northumberland. For several years he lived with his family in the unrestored keep of Bamburgh Castle — until the Sitwell family rented them their castle at Barmoor.

> This advance is fundamental to understanding our nervous system and the biochemistry of diseases. It won him a Nobel Prize

The connections are deep-rooted. His father, George, was the nephew of the historian's namesake — Dr Thomas Hodgkin, the physician and anatomist who pioneered the use of the stethoscope in Britain, and who, in a discerning paper, described the form of lymphatic cancer now universally called Hodgkin's Disease. With laughter persistently threatening to break through the Quaker facade, this circle and background was one of extreme talent and critical good humour. By diffusion and hard work — and in spite of the premature death of his father in India during the first world war — it ensured that Alan went up from Gresham School to Cambridge on a scholarship. He had already determined to focus on scientific research.

Sir Alan's father had been unable to study medicine because of eye problems and, in default, practised civil and marine engineering. Although it is not recorded, there seems little doubt that he hoped that Alan would become a physician. But when Alan went up to Cambridge for interview he was already thinking of a future in physiology and biochemistry. He was surprised, on acceptance, to be advised to spend as much time as he could on physics and mathematics. Years later he said that, although it was difficult, he took this advice seriously and it proved to be of crucial importance to his career.

He turned out to be very good at both, which explains why, at the outbreak of the second world war, he was quickly roped in by the government's scientific adviser, Frederick Lindemann (Viscount Cherwell), to take part in the development of airborne radar. Over the next few years he worked alongside Hanbury Brown, Bernard Lovell, Taffy Bowens and others in the sometimes dangerous, sometimes triumphant, but always stressed and often gloomy secret war of the air.

Since he was already working on neural transmission it might be thought he should have been roped in to develop countermeasures for nerve gases. But at this time neither Britain nor America knew that German scientists had, by accident, come across the first nerve agents in 1937, and that these were already being stockpiled for military use. The Germans, mistakenly and fortunately for the Allies, believed that Britain already had them and therefore were afraid of massive reprisals had they used them.

Since Alan Hodgkin was a dedicated Quaker, his involvement in military research of any kind requires explanation. He had spent a lot of time with family friends in Germany in the 1930s learning the language, which was essential for anyone studying science. His first-hand experiences of the Nazi regime, its brutal oppression of minorities and phoney genetics, led him to set aside his Quaker pacifism in 1939.



Hodgkin ... being installed as Master of Trinity College, Cambridge, in 1963

That the wartime years occupy almost a third of his autobiography, *Chance And Design*, with its detail of successive airborne radar designs, reveals their importance to him. These were the years which buttressed his understanding of physics and electronics, and somehow defined his future. In 1944, after a transatlantic pursuit of several years, Marion "Marni" Roua, daughter of an American academic who knew Cambridge well, agreed to marry him. This was, and throughout his life remained, a marriage of extraordinary importance and power. This was also the period during which he determined to continue the line of research already started with Andrew Huxley and which, 20 years later, would result in the Nobel Prize.

These studies of the nature of nerve impulses called for measurements of the difference in electrical potential between the inside and outside of a single nerve fibre and were at the limits of physics and electronics. Hodgkin began the studies on his own in the mid-1930s, using single axons from the common shore crab, whose nerve fibres have a diameter of two to three microns (thousandths of a millimetre). Through a Rockefeller grant awarded on the basis of his fellowship thesis, he went first to New York and then to Woods Hole Laboratory where he met and worked with K S Cole, then leading the world in the techniques needed for such studies.

Hodgkin's recollections of this pre-war journey to the US — crossing the Atlantic on board the USS Manhattan in the company of his beautiful friend Phyllis Gill, a fellow post-graduate student with a large following of admirers at Trinity known collectively as the Phyllistines — reads like a chapter from Agatha Christie. Phyllis and Alan had shared family holidays and he somehow felt that he had won her. But the beautiful Phyllis was unwell on arrival in New York, went straight off to Canada, and promptly married somebody else — leaving him in some distress. There were clear rewards however. Phyllis was a violinist who stimulated Alan's lifelong interest in music, and this was the trip on which he met and fell in love with Marni.

In the meantime, under Cole, he learned how to dissect giant axons from the squid, fibres which are about 50 times the diameter of those of the crab, and hence much easier to handle and study.

With this expertise and, thanks to Cole, much better measuring equipment than he had been able to assemble at Cambridge, Hodgkin returned to Britain in 1939 and, in August, began the collaborative experiments with Huxley. Although stopped by the war almost before they had started, the work was picked up again in 1945, when Huxley became assistant research director of the department of physiology at Cambridge.

The central questions in his own research were how do neural signals travel along the fibre; how is the electrical potential produced, and are any existing theories right? Hodgkin discovered that the electrical impulses travelling along nerve fibres have a peak potential greater than the resting potential difference between the inside and outside of the fibre, which is a kind of biochemical "battery" produced by storage of potassium ions.

This eliminated the most favoured theory of the time, that the pulse was simply a travelling "permeability leak" — a "short" — between the inside and outside of the fibre. Using equipment which in some ways derived from the radar days (and which, coupled with improved understanding of nerve signals, has subsequently formed the basis of much medical diagnostic equipment) Hodgkin and Huxley magnified single axon impulses a million-fold. They displayed these signals, stretched out in time, on cathode ray tubes. In parallel they studied the sub-millisecond electrical biochemistry going on inside the fibre. Their techniques stretched the limits of technical possibility.

Yet, by the mid-1950s, they were able to demonstrate beyond doubt that nerve impulses employ elegant and extremely rapid electrochemistry, involving the complementary movements of both potassium and sodium ions, which, in sequence, achieve a very brief electrical pulse of unexpectedly high potential.

This advance, although seemingly isolated and remote, is fundamental to understanding not only the way our nervous system works, but in the study of the underlying biochemistry of diseases involving neural malfunction. It won them a Nobel Prize.

Sir Alan was Royal Society Foulerton Research Professor at Cambridge from 1952-69, professor of biophysics from 1970-81 and president of the Royal Society from 1970 to 1975. Most of his life was spent in Cambridge, at the Downing Street laboratories of which his love, in a complex way, was indistinguishable from his love and involvement in the drive and spirit of the university, and in that of his family and home in nearby Panton Sreet.

He was a profound student of nature, an ornithologist, a traveller and communicator and, above all, a man of great intellect, compassion and sensibility. Marni gave him three daughters and a son, Jonathan Alan, who studied science at Cambridge, worked there as a molecular biologist and who in 1990 was appointed a fellow of the Royal Society. As Sir Alan might have said, family traditions really matter.

Anthony Tucker

Sir Alan Lloyd Hodgkin, scientist, born February 5, 1914; died December 20, 1998

Anthony Tucker completed this obituary shortly before his own death

Norman Adcock

Italian soccer's true Brit hero

NORMAN ADCOCK, who has died aged 75, was the first British footballer to play professionally in post-war Italy. A prolific goal scorer as centre-forward for Padova, Triestina and, ultimately, Treviso, he might have risen still higher with Milan.

The powerful Milanese club approached him during his most successful season, in 1947-48, when his goals helped Padova to promotion from Serie B to Serie A. "They asked me how much I wanted," Adcock recalled, "I replied, £4,000. Milan agreed."

The idea was that Adcock would operate at centre-forward between two former Arsenal players, Paddy Sloan, an Irish international, and the Icelander — and later government minister — Albert Gudmundsson.

These two both joined Milan in the summer of 1948, but Padova officially protested that Adcock had been tapped during the season. After an inquiry the Italian League president ruled that Adcock would officially become a Milan player — but would stay with Padova on loan for the following season.

Alas for Adcock. Milan then signed the formidable Swedish international centre-forward, Gunnar Nordahl, later enrolling his equally gifted compatriots, Gunnar Gren and Nils Liedholm to form the illustrious so-called *Grenoli* trio. So Adcock moved on to Triestina, then a top division club, under the managership of a celebrated coach, the Trieste-born Nereo Rocco, who took Adcock with him to Treviso when he went there in 1950. "We got on well," said Adcock, "with many laughs. If I satisfied Nereo, I hadn't done so bad."



Adcock ... all his own work

He started when stationed in Padua with the British army. He played several times on the Padova Stadium and so impressed their president that he asked Adcock to join the club when he was demobilised. His league debut was made for them at home in Serie B on November 17, 1946, against Cremonese. He struggled for weeks but eventually started scoring goals. Padova duly gave him a two-season contract with a signing on fee of 650,000 lira. A generous "escape" allowed him to leave at the end of season 1947-48, receiving 60 percent of any transfer fee. Padova came second that season, top the next, and were promoted.

"The city went wild," remembered Adcock, who was the leading scorer of Serie B. "I did not realise at the time I was such a good player. To think that one Englishman, surrounded by Italians, had made it on his own, and learnt the language with them."

Italian fans have much longer memories than their English equivalents. In Padua, Adcock was never forgotten and went back to Italy two or three times a year. "I'm more popular now than when I was playing. I'm treated like royalty. There is not another country in the world where, after 50 years, they would remember you with such affection, and still ask for your autographs. The youths are with their fathers, who tell them who I was. I'm speechless at times. With the Veneto public, they will not let me pay for anything. Their generosity is out of this world. It's the same every time I go there. When I complain they say 'friendship means more to us than anything'. There is no answer to that."

Adcock insisted he did everything on his own. He had no agent. His sole ambition had been to be a professional footballer, achieved for himself and for his mother, who had been widowed when he was 10.

When he returned to England he saw out the tail-end of his career with the then non-league Peterborough United, retiring in 1983. He returned to his birthplace at Boston, Lincolnshire, where he lived a tranquil and comfortable life with his wife. Obscure in England, so well remembered in Padua, his honourable career in Italy might have been better still, had he only managed to join Milan

Brian Glanville

Norman Adcock, footballer, born February 21, 1923; died December 8, 1998

A Country Diary

THE LAKE DISTRICT: Cloudless blue skies and dazzling December sunshine over most of Lakeland, except for the 10-mile trough of Windermere shrouded in impenetrable fog. We were crossing the lake by the ferry on our way to a walk over Claife Heights and were grateful that the ferryman doesn't have to steer, since, nowadays, the draft hauls itself across on cables. The few contours to Far Sawrey, on the far shore, were enough to lift us up into the sunshine again and the familiar walk past the tarns seemed especially delightful - Moss Eccles Tarn, mirror-calm, with swans and many other water fowl, and Wise Een Tarn and the Langdale and Coniston heights spread across the sky. Years ago, there was little or nothing to see because of the crowded profusion of the trees: nowadays, so enthusiastic has been the felling, you can look down the length of Windermere and across most of southern Lakeland. Unfortunately, the cleared areas now look not unlike those old photographs taken after battles in the first world war but, hopefully, time will heal the scars. On our way down a deer trotted across our path and a gaggle of geese swept north.
A HARRY ORIFFIN

Birthdays

Chris Evert-Lloyd, tennis player, 44; **Jane Fonda**, actress, 61; **Bertrand Gachot**, racing driver, 36; **Albert Lee**, rock guitarist, 55; **Geoff Lewis**, racehorse trainer, 63; **Margaret McGowan**, professor of French, University of Sussex, 67; **Steve Perryman**, footballer, 47; **Anthony Powell**, CH, novelist, 93; **John Quayle**, actor, 60; **Sir John Quinton**, chairman Premier League Football, 69; **Walter Spanghero**, rugby player, 55; **Greville Starkey**, jockey, 59; **Keifer Sutherland**, actor, 32; **Michael Tilson Thomas**, conductor, 54; **Peter Tinniswood**, playwright, 62; **Sir Cyril Townsend**, former Conservative MP, 61; **Bob Worcester**, chairman, Mori, 65.

CORRECTIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

THE PLAY that Ian McCaskill, weatherman turned panto rogue, saw at the Courtyard Theatre, West Yorkshire Playhouse (My cultural life, page 2, Friday Review, December 18), was not *The Cherry Orchard* but *The Seagull*. Mr McCaskill is appearing in *Puss In Boots* at the Theatre Royal, Windsor.

THE NAME of the Birmingham school referred to in the second of our Lockerbie anniversary pages, Page 11, December 16, should have been King Edward VI, not St Edward VI.

THE AUTHOR of the entertainment, *Spread It Abroad* (1936) mentioned in the obituary for Clive Richardson, page 16, December 16, was Herbert Farjeon (not Farjeans).

THE FILM director mentioned in a column on page 11, G2, December 17, was Rainer Werner Fassbinder (not Werner Rainer Fassbinder).

It is the policy of the Guardian to correct errors as soon as possible. Please quote date and page. Readers may contact the Readers' Editor by telephoning 0171 239 9589 between 11am and 5pm, Monday to Friday. Letters to Readers' Editor, The Guardian, 119, Farringdon Road, London EC1R 3ER. Fax: 0171 239 9897. E-mail: reader@guardian.co.uk

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FinanceGuardian

Delays in tackling 'dirty dozen' exposes failure to invest



Still waiting ... passengers at Birmingham New Street, one of Railtrack's unsolved trouble-spots PHOTOGRAPH: RICHARD LEA-HAIR

Railtrack under fire

Keith Harper
Transport Editor

RAILTRACK's failure to invest in the national network was exposed last night when the firm admitted that it will take another six years for it to complete work on its "dirty dozen", the 12 worst bottlenecks on Britain's railway.

It revealed that it has currently produced detailed plans for only two of the bottlenecks — on which some of the work will not be finished until 2005. Plans for the remaining 10 are due to be announced next year.

The best-known trouble spot is the £2.2 billion upgrading of the west coast main line between London and Glasgow, on which work has already started, and on which new trains will be running by 2002.

The other projects include a £70 million improvement in and around Birmingham New Street station, on which work is expected to start over Christmas, and an upgrade of the busy line between Clapham junction in south London and Gatwick airport.

The official jargon for these trouble spots is "network capacity constraints", or the "critical top 12". They are recognised as such because they "are affecting current performance and constraining additional capacity".

The rail regulator has told Railtrack he wants to see a 7.5 per cent improvement in its performance by the end of 1999. He insists the company sets out detailed plans for achieving this when it issues its annual targets in March.

Railtrack said: "We have yet to receive reports from all our regions. Some of them are being worked on, but we intend to remove these bottlenecks as quickly as possible."

The company seems likely to come under renewed pressure to finish the job speedily from the chairman of the Government's shadow strategic rail authority. Deputy Prime Minister John Prescott hopes to make the chairman's appointment by the end of January. Since it was privatised almost three years ago, Railtrack has been continually criticised by the industry regulator for underinvesting in the industry.

With the exception of the Birmingham New Street plan and the upgrading of the west coast main line, it was unable to provide costings for the remaining 10 projects yesterday. Sir Robert Horton, Railtrack's chairman, says that by 2001 it will have spent £1 billion more on the railway than the rail watchdog expected. But he will have to face a tougher regulator.

The most recent regulator, John Swift, was sacked by Mr Prescott for being too soft on Railtrack. The Government is looking for a successor who can make the company more accountable to the taxpayer for its actions.

The acting regulator, Chris Bolt, has told Railtrack that its profits as a private monopoly are too high, and that he plans to set a 6 per cent cap on its returns. Railtrack will have to demonstrate that it is acting more urgently to get rid of the 12 bottlenecks or it could be fined for an investment famine.

The critical list

1 Welwyn Garden City to Woolmer Green – under review
2 Leeds station, considerable congestion – still under review
3 York to Manchester, bad delays – still under review
4 West London line, badly in need of extra capacity – still under review
5 Clapham junction to Gatwick, "sheer volume" of services causing serious problems – still under review
6 Sevenoaks to Orpington, congested suburban services – still under review
7 London Bridge to Charing Cross, Thameslink layouts – still under review
8 West coast main line, £2.2 billion upgrading, ready in 2002-2005
9 Birmingham, £70 million revamp over the next two years
10 Coventry to Wolverhampton, track widening – still under review
11 Crewe to Manchester airport, track widening; options being examined.
12 Manchester Piccadilly – adjacent area to station needing improvement; options being examined

Halt is called to air wars

David Gow
Industrial Editor

SIR Richard Evans, British Aerospace chairman, and Jürgen Schrempp, ultimate head of Dasa, the aerospace division of DaimlerChrysler, have agreed a two-week "cooling-off period" in increasingly frantic talks to agree a merger between Europe's largest defence company and its German counterpart, it emerged last night.

The two chairmen have instructed their respective negotiators to go back to the drawing board in the new year after a series of last-minute hitches, including a dispute over voting rights and, not least, the intervention of GEC as a would-be partner, German industry sources said.

These latest manoeuvres in the struggle to restructure Europe's aerospace and defence industry put enormous pressure on GEC to reveal its own strategy amid evidence that the company's board is planning a meeting this week, prehaps even today, to finalise its options.

GEC sources refused to comment on the timing of any board meeting but confirmed that a £23 billion mega-merger between their company and BAe, effectively leaving Dasa to one side, was an option. "We are on the verge of making a decision but whether it's before or after Christmas is up to other people," one said.

City analysts believe GEC is more likely to conclude an alliance with one of the big American defence firms — Lockheed Martin, Northrop Grumman or Raytheon — because teaming up with another defence electronics firm is said to be six times more valuable to shareholders than a "vertical" deal with BAe, which is primarily a platform builder. But the company has exerted more muscle on the European scene since Sir Roger Hurn took over as chairman on December 1.

These moves prompted Mr Schrempp last week to go over the heads of his chief negotiators, Manfred Bischoff, Dasa chairman, and Eckhard Cordes, head of mergers and acquisitions and architect of this year's merger between Daimler and Chrysler, the US car firm. Any GEC involvement, via its Marconi defence electronics arm, would dilute Dasa's stake in the merged firm.

Economics Notebook

Competition paper learns from past



Pam Meadows

THE white paper Our Competitive Future is a surprisingly thoughtful and balanced document. Of course it contains some ideas that are so commonplace that most people would not even think of writing them down. But it avoids the common trap of regarding competitiveness as simply a matter of reducing unit labour costs (or getting the exchange rate down).

It does not treat the whole economy as though it were a single company — UK plc of the eighties, which in turn was reminiscent of Private Eye's Heathco of the seventies. Instead it looks at some the features which are associated with successful companies and asks how the government can encourage or support them.

The Chancellor's pre-Budget statement last month concentrated on the issue of productivity. Productivity and the Chancellor's statement are only part of the context. The white paper recognises that international comparisons of productivity performance have their place, but ultimately what matters is that customers are willing to pay a price for goods and services which is acceptable to, and preferably profitable for, the supplier.

By almost any conventional measure Saab or BMW cars should not sell. They are expensive and are produced in factories with high labour costs. They are no better at getting from A to B than cars which cost at least a third less. But people buy them because of the intangibles they embody. Men in particular seem to believe that these cars make them seem richer, more powerful and sexier than they really are. This aura is an intrinsic part of the product, but is impossible to capture by conventional measurement.

There are major problems in measuring productivity where quality improvements and price reductions occur simultaneously. There is a debate in America about its effect on the measurement of inflation, because conventional price indexes cannot pick up quality improvements where products of the previous inferior quality are no longer available. The most obvious example of this is the personal computer.

The McKinsey report on Britain's performance argued that one problem with British hotels was that half of them were in listed buildings, which limited the scope for improving output per employee. The implicit suggestion was that hotels should be encouraged to abandon these relics of the past and become proper modern efficient hotels with ergonomic room and floor layouts. We have all experienced these hotels. They are very efficient. They all have the same television channels. They could be anywhere.

But the 50 per cent of British hotels that are in listed buildings offer a different experience. They appeal to people who are paying with their own money, who regard the experience as an integral part of the package (rather in the way that imagined sexiness is part of the BMW package). If the only choice was a modern concrete box the result would not be higher output per employee, it would be no output per employee because the customers would not be there. This illustrates the danger of drawing conclusions from statistics alone.

The white paper does not just propose simplistic solutions. It makes the case for a change of culture in business to encourage new ideas in products, services, processes and marketing. It rightly argues that these issues are as relevant in old-fashioned low and medium technology sectors such as construction and many services as they are in the most advanced sectors such as pharmaceuticals. Moreover, partnerships can help companies develop in these areas as well as competition. It recognises that in some businesses people and their talents are the only asset, yet conventional accounting treats them only as a cost, because they are not actually owned.

Some sections have the air of ritual about them. One argues the need to improve our education base in the sciences and engineering, without addressing the reason students are choosing the arts and the social sciences because they tend to lead to better paying jobs, often with higher social status.

THE White Paper puts forward the case for local industry clusters without any evidence that these do genuinely produce spin-off benefits. There is a down side to clustering as well: it generates the one-industry town, particularly vulnerable to long-term structural changes in the economy, as with textiles, steel and coal towns. There is a counter argument that diversity in a local economy spreads risk and may encourage the spread of innovative practices in a different way. The notion of benchmarking, after all, is based on the idea that businesses operating in diverse sectors can learn from each other. The logistics industry has developed on the back of the adoption of just-in-time production methods by Japanese car companies. This is a good example of the kind of development which Our Competitive Future seeks to encourage.

Pamela Meadows is Visiting Fellow at the National Institute of Economic and Social Research and Visiting Professor at the National Institute for Working Life, Stockholm.

Big business decides that charity begins at home

Hi-fi chain tops league table of givers, writes Julia Finch

A HI-FI store chain and the Betterware household goods firm are the UK's most generous companies: according to a study published today.

The hi-fi group, Richer Sounds, has handed over an average of 11.5 per cent of its profits to good causes over the past three years, while Betterware — whose name is still synonomous with the army of door-to-door brush salesmen it once employed — gave away nearly 10 per cent of its pre-tax profits.

In cash terms their gifts are not large. Richer Sounds has made average annual donations of £108,000 in the past three years, while Betterware has given an average of £125,000.

The biggest corporate givers are drawn from among the UK's most profitable and powerful companies.

The drugs group Glaxo Wellcome heads the list with average annual donations of nearly £8 million, and a total of 20 companies support charities with donations of more than £1.5 million a year.

But, according to the Charities Aid Foundation, they are not the most generous, because most the donations represent a tiny fraction of the relevant companies' profits.

Glaxo's huge handout, for instance, is only 0.33 per cent of its annual pre-tax profits.

Only one company — the drinks and entertainment group Seagram —qualifies as one of the biggest profit-makers and one of the most generous companies. Its £4.74 million average annual handout to charitable causes is more than 7 per cent of pre-tax profits.

Last year charitable donations rose by nearly £14 million, with the top 500 donors raising a total of £195 million, according to the CAF.

The foundation is establishing a Generosity Index which will be published each Christmas, highlighting the most generous givers.

CAF's Generosity Index shows that the average donation as a percentage of pre-tax profits is only 0.22 per cent.

Richer Sounds, which was founded by 39-year-old Julian Richer and is the retailer which holds the world record for sales per square foot, gives away an amount representing 52 times the average ratio.

Antony Hunter, head of corporate services at the CAF, said: "The amount given to charity by businesses has never been measured in this way before. Now, using the CAF Generosity Index, businesses can evaluate their own charitable giving against that of other companies."

The CAF is a registered charity which tries to ensure that company donations are processed tax efficiently.

British companies now donate nearly £750,000 every working day to charity and the top 500 firms donate some £195 million a year to the good causes of their choice.

Sweet charity

Top 10 most generous corporate givers

	Average donation as % of pre-tax profits	Average annual donations (£000s)
Richer Sounds	11.5%	£108,000
Betterware	9.7%	£125,000
Combards Textiles	7.9%	£12,000
Seagram Distillers	7.1%	£4.74m
Cooper (Gay) Holdings	3.6%	£152,000
Marlowe Holdings	2.5%	£691,000
Body Shop International	2.4%	£750,000
Westaby	2.3%	£226,000
Camelot	2.2%	£37.5m
Minet Group	1.9%	£65,000
Top 10 corporate givers		
Glaxo Wellcome	0.4%	£7.99m
Marks & Spencer	0.5%	£5.01m
Seagram Distillers	7.1%	£4.74m
BP	0.2%	£4.47m
Lloyds TSB	0.2%	£4.10m
Grand Metropolitan	0.7%	£3.87m
Guinness	0.4%	£3.50m
BAT	0.2%	£3.33m
Barclays	0.2%	£2.93m
Unilever	1.3%	£2.67m

Source: Charities Aid Foundation

£3,000 windfall payment for NPI policyholders

Julia Finch

AUSTRALIAN insurance group AMP last night bought out NPI in a £2.7 billion takeover that should generate payments of an average £3,000 to most of the British mutual insurer's 630,000 policyholders.

The details of the acquisition were released to the Sydney stock exchange as the Australian market opened. The statement disclosed that all NPI policyholders will receive a minimum cash payout of £300 at a cost of £190 million. The 440,000 with-profits policyholders will get up-front around £800 each at an additional cost to AMP of £210 million. They can rely on average payouts of more than £3,000 when an additional £1.4 billion is distributed to them over time.

The final value of the payouts will depend on the size of individual policies and the length of time they have been in force. AMP is injecting £110 million into the NPI life fund and a further £800 million in capital support.

The stock exchange statement confirmed substantial job losses among NPI's 2,000 British workforce. A source close to the negotiations said: "Job shedding is implicit in any merger, but they will be kept to a minimum."

Alistair Lyons, NPI's chief executive, is expected to stay on after the AMP deal. NPI — which advertises on television using its trademark squirrel branding — put itself on the market two months ago after admitting it needed greater financial strength. The company was regarded as one of the weakest mutuals. The free asset ratio — the key measure of a life insurer's solvency — was a low 7.9 per cent last year, and this year's stockmarket gyrations are understood to have weakened NPI further.

One insurance expert said at the weekend that if NPI had not found a partner quickly it would have been forced into a merger by the Treasury.

The top-line value of the AMP-NPI deal is substantially in excess of the values suggested when the British company was first put on the market. At that time it was thought NPI might fetch only £1.5 billion.

AMP, which tried to buy Scottish Amicable last year but lost out to the Prudential, has been keen to buy a life insurer strong in the independent financial advice sector, which is growing rapidly.

It already owns Pearl Assurance, which sells direct to policyholders in their homes, fund manager Henderson and half of Richard Branson's Virgin Direct financial services operation.

MEPC boss leaves with £6m

Julia Finch

A FORMER executive at property group MEPC was paid £6 million in salary, bonus and compensation for losing his job, it emerged yesterday.

David Gruber, an American who ran the US portfolio of MEPC, received a £5.2 million commission from selling off the division and a further £773,000 compensation for subsequently losing his job.

At the same time, brewer Bass confirmed that its chairman and chief executive, Sir Ian Prosser, was paid a total of £1.6 million last year — up 97 per cent on the £826,000 he got a year earlier — as a new incentive plan began with a payout of more than £700,000.

Sir Ian, aged 55, received a basic salary of £600,000, a performance bonus of £298,000 and benefits worth £16,000, a total of £914,000. But a long-term incentive plan provided an extra payout of £717,000.

A spokesman for Bass said the new plan measured the firm's performance against rivals including Granada and Whitbread, and that the cash would be paid out at 50 per cent this year, 30 per cent next and the balance the year after.

But if Bass meets its targets Sir Ian will be in line for similar payout next year.

In addition to his pay bonanza Sir Ian has Bass shares worth more than £1 million and a range of potentially lucrative options.

At MEPC, Mr Gruber's payoff is likely to cause embarrassment for the firm and its chairman, Sir John Egan. It is understood that some shareholders are angry about the huge golden handshake and want to know how the figure — 15 times more than the chief executive is paid — was agreed. Mr Gruber sold the US business for £774 million.

MEPC, the UK's third-biggest property group, has had a difficult recent history. Dissatisfied investors once approached rivals to ask them to consider a bid, and chief executive James Tuckey only just kept his job after promising to retrench from abroad.

The firm revealed this month that pulling out of foreign operations would result in a £50 million loss.

US holds the key to Christmas

This week

Laurie Laird

THE key event of the Christmas week is the meeting of the US Federal Reserve Board's policy making committee. Observers believe the outcome on interest rates is too close to call, after November employment data out of the US indicated that the labour market remains tight.

But any move to lower rates may be seen as opening the door to similar moves in Europe. Closer to home, the Bank of England monetary policy committee will release the minutes of its December 9-10 meeting on Wednesday; the report could also provide a clue as to whether another rate cut is yet on the cards.

On the corporate side, just three companies report results this week. But there could be fireworks out of the Newcastle United annual shareholders' meeting today, after majority shareholder Douglas Hall sold a portion of his stake in the club last week.

TODAY: Finals: Pagl Holdings.
TOMORROW: Finals: Kelsey Industries.
WEDNESDAY: Interims: Stewart & Wright.

Inflation's death set for 2002

David Gow

INFLATION, the dragon that every Chancellor for the past 50 years has tried to slay, will be defunct within the next four years, a controversial economist predicts today.

Professor Doug McWilliams, chief executive of the Centre for Economic and Business Research, says the economy will contract from next year and the recession will destroy up to 300,000 more jobs while pushing down interest rates from 6.25 per cent to 3 per cent by 2000 and 2.4 per cent two years later.

The CEBR forecasts that as a result the underlying rate of inflation — the headline rate excluding mortgage interest — will drop from around 3 per cent now to 2.2 per cent next year, 1.9 per cent in 2000, 0.2 per cent in 2001 and minus 0.1 per cent in 2002. Britain's inflation rate will then be on a par with the present levels in much of continental Europe, where central bankers and economists point to a prolonged period of deflation.

The economics team adds up the pluses and minuses of a turbulent year – and considers what next year may bring

Recession time and the money is easy



Global view
Mark Atkinson

WHATEVER next? After more than a year of unprecedented turmoil in the global economy, characterised by see-sawing financial markets, the collapse of Russia and a deepening recession in Japan, only a fool would pretend to be able to predict with certainty what 1999 will bring. At the risk of sounding like John Motson, it could go either way.

Either the steps already taken, principally by western central bankers, to foster growth will suceed in steering the ailing liner off the rocks of recession and we will escape with a short period of subtrend growth. Or the look outs will prove to have spotted the danger too late and we will end up counting the casualties.

Fortunately, the immediate prospects do not look too one-sided. After teetering on the brink of collapse earlier in the year, cuts in interest rates in the US, Britain and the rest of Europe and a dramatic easing of both monetary and fiscal policy in Asia should ensure that that the global economy continues to grow, albeit sluggishly.

In September, the International Monetary Fund's predicted that world output will expand by 2.5 per cent in 1999 after 2 per cent this year. However, an interim forecast published later today is expected to shade down those numbers slighty.

Such an outcome would not be a cause for celebration. In its annual report on the prospects for developing countries, published earlier this month, the World Bank said that global economic growth of 1.8 per cent in 1998 and 1.9 per cent in 1999 would still condemn more than a quarter of the population of the developing world to falling living standards.

But at least it would not be as bad as the Great Depression, when output in the present G7 countries — the US, Japan, Germany, Britain, France, Italy, Canada — fell by almost 20 per cent between 1929 and 1932.

The risks to such a relatively benign outcome are, however, legion.

First, there is a serious threat in the world of excess capacity, a glut of oil, other commodities and finished goods, as a result of the collapse of demand in East Asia and Japan leading to global deflation.

Prices are already falling in the East and are dangerously low in the West. Unless western monetary authorities continue to respond by cutting interest rates to stimulate demand, there is a real danger of a global slump.

Second, western stock markets, especially Wall Street, look uncomfortably over-valued. As the OECD think-tank pointed out last week, share prices are hard to justify by any normal yardstick, and appear to be riding for a fall.

With the US savings rate negative, anything that leads American consumers to retrench sharply will eat into what is already expected to be moderate growth.

The European and US economies are the only shows in town at the moment and, if one of them falls by the wayside, its doubtful whether the remaining locomotive will have enough pulling power to keep the train moving.

Third, Japan remains caught in a liquidity trap, where interest rates can fall no lower to boost activity, and sucessive fiscal packages are failing to compensate for the demand deficiency. Massive restructuring of the highly indebted financial and corporate sectors is needed, but considerably doubt remains about whether politicians are willing to grasp the nettle.

AS THE world's second-largest economy, Japan's recovery remains central to any hope of a meaningful global recovery.

Fourth, Europe's nascent upswing could be snuffed out by a surge in the value of the euro against the dollar and the yen. The European Central Bank will inherit a very low interest rate of 3 per cent, but it may need to be trimmed still further to keep growth going.

Fifth, Brazil remains a wild card. Congress has already balked at passing the legislation which would have seen feather-bedded civil servants' pensions taxed in order to reduce the country's bloated budget deficit.

Unless Brazil's fiscal austerity plan succeeds in calming the markets, the risk of an uncontrolled devaluation remains huge.

Sixth, growth in China, until now a zone of stability in a sea of chaos, is decelerating quickly in spite of attempts by regional authorities to massage the figures. The threat of a devaluation of the renminbi, which would trigger another round of competitive devaluations in Asia, has not disappeared.

Amid all these dangers in the global economy, the fate of the British economy over the next 12 months is far from clear. The Chancellor confidently predicts that Britain will emerge relatively unscathed, recording GDP growth of 1 to 1.5 per cent in 1999. Few outside the Treasury believe him. The latest average of independent forecasters is just 0.7 per cent.

A growing minority expects an ever worse performance. David Machie at JP Morgan in the City is among those analysts predicting an outright recession, as was Christoher Dow, former economics director at the Bank of England.

In the book Major Recessions; Britain and the World 1920-95, published this month, just after he died, Mr Dow said that, once a major recession has started, action is restricted to mitigating its extent and duration. He reckoned that Britain was in just such a situation.

The Bank's monetary policy committee, after being side-tracked earlier in the year by misleading average earnings figures, has responded to slowing economic growth by cutting interest rates three times in the last three months, for which it has won plaudits in industry and the City. But the nominal cost of borrowing is still more than twice that in the putative euro-zone.

The Bank has probably acted too late to avoid a growth slipping into negative territory at some point over the next six to eight months, according to even the relatively optimistic analysts.

But, with inflation so subdued, there remains plenty of scope to minimise the damage by easing monetary policy much further. In a forecast published in October, Mr Dow said British interest rates could fall to as low as 2.5 per cent by late 1999.

With household and company balance sheets in such rude health, that probably won't be necessary. But a floor of 5 per cent does seem eminently reasonable.

The sooner we get there the better.

Brown proves a covert radical

Government
Larry Elliott

NOBODY could accuse Gordon Brown, the Chancellor, of a lack of consistency. Throughout 1998 his public utterances — every speech, lecture and press conference — have been graced with a familiar litany.

At the annual meeting of the International Monetary Fund in early October, for example, the Chancellor made it abundantly clear where he was coming from: "It is in the pursuit of our long-term goals — high and stable levels of growth and employment — and the rejection of the short-termism and stop-go policies that have undermined the UK economy in the past that we have taken tough decisions."

Just in case anybody at home failed to understand the message, Mr Brown repeated the sentence, word for word, in a speech to the British Retail Consortium the following week. Other favourites have been "prudence", regarding public finances and "transparency and accountability", the chestnuts saved for his assessments of the global situation.

Meanwhile, the economy has been steadily slowing. In the final quarter of last year, it was growing at an annual rate of 4 per cent, but the pace of expansion dropped to 3.7 per cent in the first quarter of 1998, 3 per cent in the second and 2.3 per cent in the third quarter. Limited data for the fourth quarter suggest the situation has markedly worsened, with manufacturers madly destocking in response to weak consumer demand.

Six months ago, Mr Brown was the darling of Labour MPs when he announced that spending on health would rise by 4.7 per cent a year and on education by 5.1 per cent for the rest of this parliament. But the bouquets will be replaced with brickbats if the economy slides into recession over coming months.

Critics of the Chancellor — and there are plenty — think the state of the economy is due to his bone-headed orthodoxy. Mr Brown's own actions were critical — handing control of interest rates to the Bank of England, freezing public spending and conniving in the over-valuation of sterling. Now, they say, he is reaping a traditional British whirlwind, for all his talk of ridding the country of boom-bust.

There is something in this view. It is undoubtedly true that the conduct of macroeconomic policy during 1998 has helped create the conditions in which a sharp slowdown in activity was inevitable, and an outright recession a distinct possibility. Mr Brown may go down in history as the financial equivalent of Hardy's Mayor of Casterbridge, who makes an early error which comes back to haunt him.

That said, there have been many good things about the conduct of the economy in 1998, the Chancellor's rhetoric masking a range of radical and redistributive reforms. The idea that the overall strategy is reactionary, a continuation of Thatcherism by other means, is lazy thinking.

The March Budget was a prime example of Labour's approach, which is to employ the language of extreme moderation but then slip through measures which are actually progressive. The City loved the Budget talk of prudence and fiscal rectitude but the meat of the package was that money taken quietly from the rich was recycled to the less well-off in the shape of higher child benefit and the groundbreaking working families tax credit, which will ensure that those in work with children will have £190 a week coming into their households.

MR BROWN tried the same tactic with the comprehensive spending review. In June, he revealed that the pay-off for the two-year spending freeze and the adoption of tough fiscal rules would be an increase in public spending of 2.75 per cent a year for three years, including a doubling of capital investment.

Unkind observers pointed out that, over the five-year period 1997-2002, public spending growth will prove to have been little different from that under John Major.

But, with his Iron Chancellor credentials unsullied, Mr Brown then unveiled his increases in health and education spending — and spending on health and education is one of the most effective forms of redistribution.

The same approach — talk tough, act soft — applied in international affairs. Again, the rhetoric was of the need for monetary and fiscal orthodoxy while the reality was a British-American push to make the West realise the threat to the global economy was no longer inflation but deflation. In many ways the most significant event of the year was the G7 statement which urged central banks to pursue growth strategies. As Mr Brown put it in Harvard last week: "In the international economy, the era of absentee government is over."

So how can 1998 be summed up? Obviously, interest rates should have come down more quickly than they did, and if the economy goes into recession as a result Mr Brown will not escape his share of the blame.

His reluctance to even attempt to talk down the level of sterling seems bizarre, given what the Confederation of British Industry has been saying about exporters' prospects. But the macroeconomic outlook is not entirely poor, given that inflation is low and the public finances are much healthier than expected. Both monetary and fiscal policies will be eased next year.

More important for the long term, the unfolding crisis of the global economy over the past 18 months has legitimised the return of an interventionist approach to economic policy, at the micro-economic domestic level and on the international stage.

Like the Government as a whole, the Chancellor is more radical than he looks.

Waking up weightless on Wall Street

Markets
Charlotte Denny

AS THE old saw goes, if you owe the bank a thousand dollars, you are in trouble. If you owe the bank a million dollars, your *bank* is in trouble. But if you owe the bank $900 billion, then the whole financial world is in trouble — as the case of Long Term Capital Management proved this year.

Concerns about the health of the tiger economies did not stop Wall Street and the Footsie rocketing away over the first six months of the year. Both had reached record highs by July despite dire warnings from analysts that shares were overvalued by any historical measure.

But the prospects for world growth were becoming darker by the month. Repeated attempts to kickstart Japan were largely unsuccessful. But the first event to really spoil the party happened in August, when Russia decided that it was going to take an unscheduled holiday from foreign debt repayment.

The news rocked the markets, wiping £37 billion off the value of shares in London and sending markets around the world plummeting. Investors raced to find a safer haven for their money, causing the differential between emerging market bonds and bonds in the developed world to widen sharply. This, in turn, put players like LTCM — which had taken one-way bets on credit spreads around the world — into difficulties.

Throughout the whole of September, rumours were circulating Wall Street that one of the hedge funds — the risky investment vehicles for wealthy individuals that are not governed by normal financial market disclosure rules — was in trouble.

When the size of LTCM'S exposure became apparent at the end of September, it was not only the American banks which were passing around the hat to keep the Wall Street hedge fund from going under.

The numbers frightened everyone. LTCM had made bets in the markets worth $900 billion — about 250 times their capital worth. Fears that financial panic might spread throughout the world markets prompted a £2 billion global rescue operation, including a $250 million contribution from Barclays.

The markets reacted with some of the steepest falls seen since the crash of 1987. In an attempt to shore up fragile confidence and stop a credit squeeze throttling the American economy, the Chairman of Federal Reserve, Alan Greenspan, announced a cut to borrowing rates to 5.25 per cent.

The Bank of England quickly followed the Fed at the beginning of a global round of rate reduction which culminated in the euro-zone countries cutting their rates in early December.

By the end of the year, the promise of cheaper borrowing — a signal that policymakers were finally taking the financial crisis seriously — had prompted recoveries on both sides of the Atlantic.

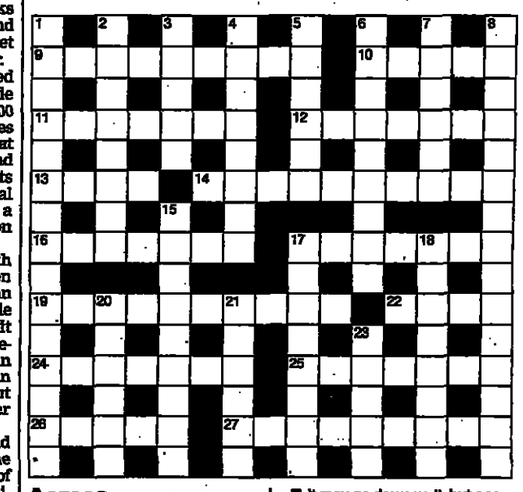
On Wall Street, the Dow Jones had bounced back above its mid-year high at the end of November, before sliding off slightly in December. The Footsie was more muted, making up most of its losses.

As the markets close for Christmas, investors may be glad of a holiday.

But come the New Year, it will be time again to see how long Wall Street defies gravity.

Guardian Crossword No 21,463

Set by Rufus



Across

9 Cradle song? Not really! (4,5)
10 Fruit crop (5)
11 Force one may make light of (7)
12 A game little insect (7)
13 System for better transport (4)
14 Set right an inaccurate alignment (10)
16 Notice cut out and displayed (7)
17 Crack mountaineers will be familiar with it (7)
19 The first to be in action (2,3,5)
22 Short of ammunition (4)
24 The way bargees walk (7)
25 About to be included in special offer on the house (3,4)
26 Key edict of Parliament, one raising awkward points (5)
27 Chaps entering into a welcome correspondence (9)

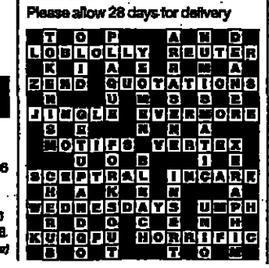
Down

1 Secret trial of service one pays for (7,8)
2 Casting is one of his jobs in the studio (8)
3 Black mark may be examined in the lab. (5)
4 Tees should be made with sand — agreed? (8)
5 Two bills I stuck on a tree (6)
6 A fount of small type (9)
7 It may go down well, but one dies to kick it (6)
8 Order to be dispatched (8,2,5)
15 Stimulant for a N. Ireland settlement (9)
17 Fir cones come from them (8)
18 Put into liquidation? (6)
20 What stimulated a half back to be a striker? (6)
21 Try again (2-4)
23 A tall one may be difficult to carry out (5)

WINNERS OF PRIZE PUZZLE 21,458

This week's winners of a Collins English Millennium Dictionary are Gillian Oakes of Cheadle, Cheshire, Ian Coldicott of Norwich, Anne Peacock of London, SW19, Mol Pritchard of Stamford, Lincolnshire, and David Walker of Cottingham, East Yorkshire.

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The Guardian Christmas appeal

This year the Guardian is inviting readers to spend a little extra at Christmas - and make a donation to The Guardian Christmas Appeal, the proceeds from which will be distributed among the selected charities. For more information on these charities and their work, please see the regular features running in the paper throughout December. You can give to any of the charities individually or make a general donation to the appeal, simply by calling the number below with a credit or debit card.

0990 199 515

WaterAid works to provide clean drinking water, sanitation and to promote public hygiene among the 1.4 billion people world wide who do not have clean drinking water.

Family Service Units offers counselling and support at grass-roots level to families in Britain's most deprived inner cities.

The Soil Association has been championing organic farming since 1945, and studying the impact of modern agriculture on animals, humans and the environment.

The Appeal is also supporting the five winning charities from the Guardian Jerwood Award, which rewards excellence in small charities from all over Britain: **Deafblind UK, Habitat for Humanity (Belfast), Jessie's Fund, Free Form Arts Trust, Walsall Carers Centre.**

Calls charged at national rates. Lines open until midnight on 3/1/99. Unfortunately we cannot accept Switch payments.

We're all unimportant now

Worm's eye
Dan Atkinson

ONE OF the great issues about which we are all expected to become terribly anxious is the so-called information gap between the rich and the poor.

The idea seems to be that wealthy people will enjoy the enormous advantage of clicking around for hours on end with their computers while people on council estates will be forced to do terribly boring things such as drinking, going to the races and making love.

There is no doubt that the gap is a real one. But whether it has much to do with access to the Internet and that sort of thing is more doubtful. There is, for example, a chasm opening up between those who have the private-line numbers of important people and can thus reach them by dialling once only, and the great unwashed, who find themselves snared for 20 minutes at a time on a robot-operated switchboard that always seems to be inviting the caller to dial 1 "for further options".

Now that's a real information gap — as is the one opening up between those who are tip-toeing as demurely as possible towards the exits on western financial markets and those who have simply swallowed the reassuring line that the events of 1998 — from Tokyo through Malaysia and Russia all the way to Brazil — were merely an unfortunate kink in the asymptotic surge towards Total Competitiveness and Total Returns.

It is a long-established stock market rule that the last people to realise that it's time to sell are in the last wave of suckers who came in just before the top.

> People on council estates will be forced to do terribly boring things like drinking, going to the races and making love

Take one look at the ever-expanding bubble in the City and Wall Street during the past 12 months — and then put your hand on your heart and insist that the current valuations are entirely in line with a US economy borrowed way beyond the hilt and a British economy tipping into recession. Of course, it could all be different this time. But then it always is.

The trigger word for a stock market crash is "plateau". This is the reassuring handle that was applied 70 years ago to the last unsustainable inflation of asset values.

It sounds so comforting: a plateau is a big flat thing that you just cannot fall off.

You sit on it, soak up the sunshine there and congratulate yourself on having held your nerve, on having refused to be panicked by troubles in far-off countries and on having generally been a bit of an Ivan Boesky.

There is nothing wrong, of course, with big flat surfaces at a very high altitude. Nothing wrong at all, that is, until you realise that you are three-quarters of the way over the edge. A very merry Christmas — and a very cautious new year.

Indicators

TODAY — UK: National accounts (Q3)
UK: Balance of payments (Q3).
TOMORROW — EMU: ECB meeting.
US: FOMC meeting (November).
IMF: World economic outlook.
WEDNESDAY — UK: Trade in goods (November).
US: GDP (Q3 Final).
THURSDAY — US: FOMC meeting.
US: Jobless claims (week ending December 19).
FRIDAY — JP: Industrial production (November; prelim).
Source: HSBC Markets

Tourist rates — bank sells

Australia	2.63	Germany	2.7033	Malaysia	6.36
Austria	18.95	Greece	453.43	Malta	0.61
Belgium	55.76	Hong Kong	12.67	Netherlands	3.036
Canada	2.52	India	71.19	New Zealand	3.13
Cyprus	0.80	Ireland	1.0606	Norway	12.65
Denmark	10.34	Israel	7.03	Portugal	275.88
Finland	8.30	Italy	2.691	Saudi Arabia	6.20
France	8.04				

Singapore	2.72		
South Africa	9.84		
Spain	229.96		
Sweden	13.22		
Switzerland	2.18		
Turkey	407,980		
USA	1.6368		

Supplied by NatWest (excluding rupee, shekel and rouble)

Former England captain unbeaten on 210

Tour match: Australian XI v England XI

Atherton doubles up as bowlers take strain

Mike Selvey in Hobart sees England's batsmen punish an injury weakened attack

A MATCH that for almost two days had been reduced to farcical levels regained its composure during the last hour yesterday as England's bowlers finally got to work against what Australians — not entirely without justification — believe to be the strongest batting side in the world outside their Test side.

Responding to England's 469 for six declared, the Australian XI had reached 30 for no wicket by stumps, the openers Matthew Elliott and Greg Blewett surviving a concerted effort from Alex Tudor and Angus Fraser as for the first time the sun burst through on what had been a blustery, cool and substantially wet day. It lent little more than a late piquancy to a game that beforehand had been puffed as the sixth Test but which by the close of play on Saturday had already sunk to the level of a benefit match as *the casualty wards filled* with Australian bowlers.

Gavin Robertson, the off-spinner, failed even to make it to the starting grid, a back strain ruling him out before the match had begun. Paul Reiffel managed to get only halfway through his second over before the air was rent with the noise of his hamstring twanging.

By the end of the day, Michael Kasprowicz had joined him on the treatment couch, and a variety of substitute fielders — ranging from the highest run-scorer in Test cricket (Allan Border) to youngsters who have scarcely started shaving — served their time.

So with part-time bowlers operating on a flat pitch, there was a certain air of inevitability about play yesterday once the morning rain had cleared. Mike Atherton, *who had worked hard for his* century on the first day, carried on where he left off and when the declaration came had reached an unbeaten 210 in just over eight hours' batting, the first double century of his career (he did once make 199).

There were 26 boundaries — one, lofted straight, took him to his second hundred — with some clean driving in particular yesterday. Atherton came into this game with a tour average of just 19, and not even a half-century in the Tests: he at least will have benefited from time spent panning Australian bowling around, even if it was third rate.

Of Graeme Hick's century — the 104th of his career — there was little to say that has not been said so often before. For 153 minutes he struck the ball with awesome power and a cleanliness that bordered on godliness.

Fourteen not out overnight, bookmakers refused to offer odds on him making three figures, a shrewd move. None of this is Hick's fault, of course: in these circumstances he can only do what he is asked to do. But the pity is that such an *innings* merely serves to highlight the disparity between his destruction of feeble bowling and his succumbing so readily when the chips are down.

Suffice to say that he hit Matthew Elliott's dobby left-armers for 18 in four balls and Michael Bevan's chinamen and googlies for 22 from the first five balls of another before a huge skyer to long-on was well caught by Nathan Webb, a 17-year-old substitute. Hick's second fifty took 28 balls, and with Atherton he added 195 for the fourth wicket in 2½ hours. It will not change the perspective on Hick's career. It was magnificent but it was not war.

Of more significance was the innings of Ben Hollioake, whose contribution to this tour, once he had pulled a groin in the first match at Lilac Hill, has been negligible. Since then he has played in two matches, making five and four not out against the Victorian second string in Melbourne, and a second-ball nought against the Prime Minister's XI in Canberra last week.

The talk, though, was of a possible recall. But if there ever was a chance that he might assume the No. 7 spot in the side for the next Test, which starts in Melbourne in Boxing Day, then that was dispelled yesterday when his first ball, from Brendon Julian — left-arm over and banged in short — ran across his bows, and took the edge. Sometimes the game borders on the sadistic.



High ball . . . Graeme Hick whacks Brendon Julian for six

Scoreboard

ENGLAND XI
First innings

*M A Atherton not out	210
M A Butcher c Richards b Law	25
J P Crawley c Gilchrist b Blewett	27
M R Ramprakash b Bevan	65
G A Hick c Sub b Bevan	125
B C Hollioake c Gilchrist b Julian	0
†W K Hegg c Sub b Bevan	4
Extras (lb6, w2, nb5)	13
Total (for 6 dec, 125.1 overs)	469

Fall of wickets: 57, 125, 265, 460, 460, 469.
Did not bat: D G Cork, A J Tudor, A R C Fraser, P M Such.
Bowling: Kasprowicz 18.3-2-57-0; Reiffel 1.3-0-4-0; Julian 32-6-98-1; Blewett 24-2-73-1; Law 21-4-84-1; Bevan 23.1-3-94-3; Elliott 5-0-34-0; Lehmann 1-0-10-0.

AUSTRALIA XI
First innings

M T G Elliott not out	14
G S Blewett not out	11
Extras (lb2, nb3)	5
Total (for 0, 11 overs)	30

To bat: C J Richards, *D S Lehmann, S G Law, M G Bevan, †A C Gilchrist, P R Reiffel, B P Julian, M S Kasprowicz, G R Robertson.
Bowling: Tudor 6-3-12-0; Fraser 5-2-18-0.
Umpires: S G Davies and P Parker.



Power play . . . Michael Atherton lashes out in Hobart PHOTOGRAPH: CLIVE MASON

Time to put phone back on its hook

SCREEN BREAK
Martin Kelner

PEOPLE who call phone-in shows are, by reputation, sad souls, lonely and unloved. So it was no surprise when Graham, calling in to Danny Baker's Talk Radio programme on Saturday evening, turned out to be one Graham Kelly, formerly of the Football Association.

Kelly, who clearly now has the time on his hands to call these programmes, was phoning to take issue with a typical piece of rabble-rousing in which Baker suggested that the quality of play in the Premier League was not half as red-hot as the hype would have you believe, and that players earning 20, 30 or 50 thousand pounds a week (Baker kept upping the figure as he warmed to his theme) had no right to perform like the journeymen of yore.

My sympathies, I must say, were with Baker since I was listening to the broadcast on my way home from Old Trafford after a match littered with misplaced passes, in which Manchester United's international defenders constantly pressed the panic button when faced with the raw-boned, enthusiastic, but scarcely world-class Brian Deane.

Maybe the Premiership is going through a mid-life or mid-season crisis, because there seems to be a lot of that about at the moment: witless, helter-skelter football that does little to lighten a bleak midwinter.

"Take the phone off the hook," Martin Tyler said on Sky before Manchester United kicked off against Chelsea on Wednesday night.

"This is the first of two colossal contests."

By half-time I had not only put the phone back on the hook, but was taking faxes and sending e-mails.

The match between England's finest was not significantly better than Sky's offering two nights earlier, when Leeds scuffed their way to an undeserved victory over Coventry.

When you catch yourself in front of football of this standard — you have got the beers in so you might as well continue watching — a little game you can play at home is to try and guess how long it will be before Tyler or Andy Gray admits that the quality is not as high as it might be.

An hour into the United-Chelsea match, it was "an enjoyable, absorbing, tactical contest". By the final whistle, it was a game that "hadn't quite lived up to expectations".

Sky obviously need to keep interest in the Premiership high, but they are helped neither by the generally poor performances of English clubs in Europe, which gives some of us the message that "the best league in the world" is not exactly as advertised, nor by the less than sparkling entertainment content of many of their own live matches this season.

Baker is spot on in saying that, the more we pay to watch Premiership soccer, the more we are likely to notice if we are being sold a pup. His caller, Graham, countered with the old chestnut about teams "cancelling each other out". A pity, then, that neither Liverpool nor Villa could manage to "cancel out" Celta Vigo.

I am not sure I agree with Baker, though, in his assertion that soccer was better in the Seventies and early Eighties.

I have been watching Match of the Day Greats, where some of the defending makes Saturday's display by United's back four look rather accomplished.

The 1980 Norwich-Liverpool match shown last week featured Martin Peters, who was famously described as being "10 years ahead of his time". By my reckoning, this meant that last week he was about eight years behind the times, which looked about right.

Baker was also on less than firm ground grumbling about the amount players are paid, since he is, I assume, rather handsomely rewarded himself for doing something fairly unremarkable; although he continues to do it in an infinitely more entertaining fashion than David Mellor, his opposition on Radio 5 Live.

Mellor has, as you might imagine, had plenty to say about Graham Kelly's resignation, not only on his phone-*in but also on a* programme called The Last Word With Jimmy Hill on Sky's new digital Sports News channel.

Mellor, who was introduced by Jimmy Hill as "a fellow broadcaster of consummate skill", leading one to hope for a different guest altogether, looked indecently satisfied at Kelly's downfall, seeing it as a great opportunity for "dynamic action".

He kept banging on about the "dynamic action" needed to administer this "most dynamic, popular, finance-driven sport". When Hill, who is rather good at this sort of thing, suggested to the smug one that "dynamic action" was exactly what Graham Kelly had taken, Mellor said he disapproved of the principle of loaning the Welsh FA money in order to ensure its support internationally.

"I don't like the sound of that," he said, which rather took the breath away since every government of which Mellor was a member operated on exactly that principle.

Weekend results

RUGBY UNION

ALLIED DUNBAR
Premiership One

Bath	11	Saracens	19
Gloucester	18	Leicester	23
London Irish	20	Harlequins	16
London Scottish	18	Richmond	29
Newcastle	30	Sale	15
West Hartlepool	9	Northampton	33

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Leicester	13	10	0	3	397	236	20
Northampton	13	10	0	3	362	272	20
Saracens	13	9	0	4	410	283	18
Wasps	13	8	0	5	390	269	16
Bath	13	7	0	6	342	284	14
Newcastle	12	7	0	5	337	300	14
Harlequins	12	7	0	5	321	310	14
Gloucester	13	7	0	6	290	287	14
Richmond	12	7	0	5	327	326	14
Ldn Irish	13	6	0	7	320	334	12
Sale	13	5	0	8	307	380	10
Ldn Scottish	12	3	0	9	214	310	6
Bedford	13	2	0	11	294	422	4
W Hartlepool	13	1	0	12	192	510	2

Premiership Two

Blackheath	24	Fylde	17
Bristol	36	Waterloo	8
London Welsh	11	Rugby	7
Orrell	21	Exeter	23
Rotherham	29	Worcester	19
Coventry	21	Moseley	46
Leeds	36	Wakefield	0

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Bristol	13	11	0	2	398	182	22
Worcester	13	11	0	2	324	186	20
Rotherham	12	8	0	4	281	148	16
Coventry	13	8	0	5	341	283	16
Ldn Welsh	13	8	0	5	308	298	16
Waterloo	13	8	0	5	238	252	16
Exeter	13	7	1	5	286	308	15
Leeds	13	7	0	6	301	157	14
Orrell	13	6	0	7	268	192	12
Rugby	13	6	0	7	209	258	12
Moseley	13	5	0	8	269	306	10
Wakefield	13	2	0	11	218	403	4
Fylde	12	1	1	10	185	387	3
Blackheath	13	1	0	12	148	400	2

JEWSON NATIONAL LEAGUE
One

Camberley	26	Birmingham/Sol	14
Henley	18	Rosslyn Pk	15
Lydney	10	Otley	3
Manchester	27	Harrogate	0
Morley	14	Reading	17
Wharfedale	23	Newbury	10

Postponed: Nottingham v Liv St Helens.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Manchester	14	12	0	2	410	201	24
Henley	14	12	0	2	343	155	24
Otley	14	9	0	5	262	212	18
Reading	14	8	0	6	315	286	16
Lydney	14	8	0	6	273	255	16
Camberley	14	7	1	6	298	354	15
Rosslyn Pk	13	7	0	6	281	217	14
Birmingham/S	14	6	0	8	281	260	12
Wharfedale	14	6	0	8	232	233	12
Newbury	14	6	0	8	221	238	12
Nottingham	13	5	0	8	245	252	10
Harrogate	14	4	1	9	160	254	9
Morley	13	4	0	9	205	313	8
Liv St Helens	13	1	0	12	155	443	2

Two: North

Hinckley	9	Preston GH	20
Kendal	7	Stourbridge	20
Lichfield	7	Nuneaton	25
Sandal	47	Winnington Pk	17
Sedgley Pk	24	Walsall	11
Sheffield	16	Aspatria	13
Whitchurch	19	New Brighton	26

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Preston GH	13	12	0	1	446	199	24
New Brighton	13	11	0	2	384	111	22
Stourbridge	13	11	0	2	374	212	22
Sheffield	13	9	0	4	288	205	18
Nuneaton	13	7	2	4	285	278	16
Aspatria	13	7	0	6	345	289	14
Sedgley Pk	13	6	1	6	348	276	13
Kendal	13	6	0	7	302	213	12
Sandal	13	6	0	7	339	316	12
Walsall	13	5	1	7	274	367	11
Whitchurch	13	4	1	8	197	296	9
Hinckley	13	2	1	10	170	372	5
Lichfield	13	1	0	12	153	434	2
Winnington Pk	13	1	0	12	150	486	2

Two: South

Bracknell	24	Plymouth	13
Havant	13	Cheltenham	21
Met Police	18	Bridgwater	18
Norwich	7	Esher	23
Redruth	22	Barking	18
Tabard	24	Clifton	24
Weston-S-Mare	5	North Walsham	13

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Esher	13	12	0	1	435	143	24
Bracknell	13	11	0	2	268	178	22
Barking	13	10	0	3	294	151	20
N Walsham	13	10	0	3	265	158	20
Met Police	13	8	1	4	253	209	17
Norwich	13	7	0	6	194	197	14
Tabard	13	6	1	6	226	212	13
Weston-S-Mare	13	5	1	7	203	255	11
Plymouth	13	4	1	8	225	287	9
Bridgwater	13	3	2	8	231	281	8
Clifton	13	3	1	9	213	254	7
Redruth	13	3	1	9	187	310	7
Cheltenham	13	3	0	10	176	306	6
Havant	13	2	0	11	151	389	4

SWALEC CUP
Fourth round

Group A			
Powys	6	Pontypool Utd	16
Ebbw Vale	73	Treherbert	15
Group B			
Glynneath	10	Trimsaran	25

Postponed: Cross Keys v Dunvant.

Group C			
Bridgend	29	Treorchy	24
Talywain	9	Nantymoel	14
Group D			
Beddau	0	Whitland	35
Pontypool	64	Rhigos	6
Group E			
Penygraig	10	Rhymney	6
Wrexham	15	Neath	45
Group F			
Monmouth	11	Llanhilleth	20
Ystradgynlais	32	Vardre	20
Group G			
Llanharan	19	Newport	25
Risca	9	Swansea	57
Group H			
Heol-Y-Cyw	10	Tondu	27
Hirwaun	19	Kidwelly	9
Group I			
Narberth	19	Caerphilly	29

Postponed: Cwmavon v Bedwas.

Group J			
Abercwmboi	5	Maesteg	20
Betws	3	Blackwood	15
Group K			
Blaengarw	10	Ynysybwl	10

(Ynysybwl win on away rule)

Pontyclun	0	Llanelli	80
Group L			
Pencoed	11	Abertillery	25

Postponed: Cardiff v Llandovery

Group M			
Cwmllynfell	13	Taffs Well	7
Pontypridd	71	Aberavon	15
Group N			
Builth Wells	5	Rumney	26
Tredegar	20	Merthyr	16
Group O			
Aberavon	48	Carmarthen Q	22
Ystrad Rhondda	19	S Wales Police	13
Group P			
Bonymaen	51	Newbridge	12
Oakdale	7	UWIC	12

FIFTH ROUND DRAW: Group A: Pontypool Utd v Ebbw Vale. **Group B:** Cross Keys or Dunvant v Trimsaran. **Group C:** Talywain v Bridgend. **Group D:** Whitland v Pontypool. **Group E:** Penygraig v Neath. **Group F:** Llanhilleth v Ystradgynlais. **Group G:** Swansea v Newport. **Group H:** Hirwaun v Tondu. **Group I:** Caerphilly v Cwmavon or Bedwas. **Group J:** Maesteg v Blackwood. **Group K:** Llanelli v Ynysybwl. **Group L:** Cardiff or Llandovery v Abertillery. **Group M:** Cwmllynfell v Pontypridd. **Group N:** Tredegar v Rumney. **Group O:** Ystrad Rhondda v Aberavon. **Group P:** Bonymaen v UWIC. (To be played on Jan 30).

ANGLO-WELSH FRIENDLIES

Bedford	14	Swansea	28
Wasps	28	Cardiff	24

TENNENT'S VELVET PREMIERSHIP
First Division

Boroughmuir	33	Glasgow Hawks	18
Hawick	25	Jed-Forest	21
Heriots FP	32	Watsonians	19
Stirling County	10	Currie	18
West of Scotland	24	Melrose	0

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Heriots FP	12	10	0	2	427	220	40
Melrose	12	9	0	4	332	199	40
Glasgow H	11	8	0	3	279	182	37
Currie	10	8	0	2	245	187	35
Hawick	11	6	0	5	210	240	28
Jed-Forest	11	4	2	5	221	268	21
Boroughmuir	11	3	0	8	242	291	18
Watsonians	11	3	1	7	239	307	18
W of Scotland	11	3	0	8	186	283	16
Stirling Co	10	0	1	9	154	358	4

Second Division

Aberdeen GSFP	21	Edinburgh Acads	13
Biggar	14	Dundee HSFP	10
Gala	34	Selkirk	3
Kelso	20	Kilmarnock	19
Musselburgh	16	Kirkcaldy	26

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Gala	12	9	0	3	359	152	46
Kelso	12	10	0	2	305	169	46
Kirkcaldy	11	7	0	4	231	180	36
Aberdn GSFP	12	5	2	5	221	234	28
Selkirk	11	5	1	5	186	220	26
Biggar	12	6	0	6	182	257	26
Musselburgh	12	5	0	7	288	318	25
Dundee HSFP	10	4	1	5	232	240	18
Edinburgh Ac	12	2	0	10	176	294	13
Kilmarnock	10	2	0	8	143	258	11

Third Division

East Kilbride	9	Peebles	13
Glenrothes	8	Gordonians	47
Grangemouth	14	Glasgow S	8
Stewarts Mel FP	15	Berwick	18

Postponed: Ayr v Lodge.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Peebles	12	11	0	1	235	145	46
E Kilbride	11	8	0	3	239	145	37
Grangemouth	10	7	0	3	188	138	32
Preston Lodge	11	6	0	5	223	158	29
Ayr	10	6	1	3	203	161	29
Berwick	11	6	0	5	173	183	26
Gordonians	11	4	2	5	232	152	25
Stewarts Mel	10	1	1	8	172	214	12
Glenrothes	10	2	0	8	110	260	9
Glasgow S	12	1	0	11	119	328	6

AIB LEAGUE
First Division

Ballymena	23	St Marys	13
Blackrock Coll	24	Shannon	26
Buccaneers	21	Terenure	16
Garryowen	46	Galwegians	0
Lansdowne	15	Clontarf	3
Young Munster	17	Cork Const	11

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Lansdowne	3	3	0	0	59	30	6
Garryowen	2	2	0	0	68	15	4
Ballymena	2	2	0	0	46	16	4
Blackrock Coll	3	2	0	1	72	51	4
Buccaneers	3	2	0	1	58	64	4
Clontarf	3	1	0	2	52	53	2
St Marys	3	1	0	2	54	58	2
Y Munster	2	1	0	1	32	42	2
Shannon	2	1	0	1	29	47	2
Cork Const	2	0	0	2	28	41	0
Terenure	2	0	0	2	32	53	0
Galwegians	3	0	0	3	23	83	0

Second Division

Ballynahinch	6	Derry	27
Bective Rngrs	15	Wanderers	16
Dolphin	8	Old Wesley	5
Dungannon	22	Portadown	27
Old Belvedere	3	Malone	7
Skerries	10	Greystones	26
Sunday's Well	23	Old Crescent	6
UCC	6	DLSP	13

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Sunday's Well	3	3	0	0	58	20	6
Old Belvedere	3	2	0	1	91	21	4
DLSP	2	2	0	0	47	28	4
Old Crescent	3	2	0	1	64	52	4
Wanderers	3	2	0	1	72	70	4
Malone	2	1	1	0	15	11	3
Dungannon	2	1	0	1	52	33	2
Portadown	2	1	0	1	44	41	2
Derry	3	1	0	2	58	56	2
Bective Rngrs	2	1	0	1	34	33	2
Greystones	3	1	0	2	43	58	2
Skerries	3	1	0	2	43	68	2
Dolphin	3	1	0	2	30	47	2
Old Wesley	4	1	0	3	46	87	2
UCC	2	0	1	1	14	21	1
Ballynahinch	2	0	0	2	9	46	0

RUGBY LEAGUE

SILK CUT CHALLENGE CUP
Second round

Askam	26	Heworth	22
Beverley E Hull	12	Townville	28
Dodworth	12	Castleford LL	24
Dudley Hill	29	Wigan St Patricks	8
Eccles	37	Normanton	16
Moldgreen	21	Oulton	18
Norland	39	Crosfields	0
Oldham St Annes	34	Ellenborough	6
Queens	28	West Hull	40
Rochdale Mild	28	Hull Dockers	10
Saddleworth	10	Walney Central	5
Siddal	24	Featherstone MW	7
Skirlaugh	8	Ideal Isberg	2
Thornhill	25	Barrow Island	12
Wigan Rose Br	6	Leigh MR	17
Wigan St Judes	32	Woolston	8
Wath Brow	16	London Skolars	10

Postponed: Egremont v Haydock; Featherstone L v Ovenden.

NATIONAL CONFERENCE LEAGUE
First Division

East Leeds	12	Redhill	15
Milford	16	Millom	34
Shaw Cross	23	Leigh East	5

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Redhill	17	14	0	3	453	249	28
Dudley Hill	14	10	1	3	314	209	21
Siddal	16	10	1	5	313	218	21
Leigh East	15	10	1	4	330	294	21
Featherstone	14	9	1	4	280	199	19
Wigan St Judes	14	9	0	5	300	187	18
Moldgreen	16	7	1	7	254	333	15
Oulton	16	6	1	9	351	304	13
Barrow Island	16	6	1	9	315	313	13
East Leeds	16	5	1	10	205	269	11
Shaw Cross	16	5	1	10	235	336	11
Rochdale	14	5	0	9	225	348	10
Millom	15	4	0	11	285	371	8
Milford	16	2	1	13	258	465	5

Second Division

Blackbrook	40	Dewsbury Moor	16
Eastmoor	72	New Earswick	2

Postponed: Keighley Alb v York Acorn.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Ideal Isberg	16	13	1	2	394	181	27
Eccles	14	13	0	1	503	187	26
Blackbrook	17	11	2	4	402	226	24
Eastmoor	16	10	0	6	414	308	20
Ldn Skolars	16	10	0	6	332	285	20
Crosfields	13	8	0	5	279	261	16
Hull Dockers	16	7	0	9	364	262	14
Dodworth	15	7	0	8	238	283	14
New Earswick	17	7	0	10	269	410	14
Normanton	15	6	0	9	257	334	12
Dewsbury Mr	15	5	0	10	242	382	10
York Acorn	16	4	1	11	240	342	9
Ovenden	15	3	0	12	206	454	6
Keighley Alb	15	2	0	13	183	419	4

GOLF

COOLUM CLASSIC (Brisbane)
Leading final scores
(Aus unless stated)

	271	
S Appleby		69 70 63 69
	275	
C Spence		65 67 71 72
	278	
C Parry		72 68 69 69
T Carolan		72 71 70 65
	279	
P Senior		73 70 65 71
S Laycock		71 69 69 70
M Cain		70 71 68 70
Also		
	294	
D Watson (Eng)		73 73 76 72

TENNIS

GIROBANK TOUR (Nottingham): **Finals: Men:** M Weal (GB) bt P Hand (GB) 6-4 6-4. **Women:** J Letrova (Rus) bt K Warne-Holland (GB) 6-0 6-3.

BIATHLON

WORLD CUP (Bratislava): **Men** (10km): 1 S Fischer (Ger) 24min 36.1sec; 2 O Maluhins (Lat) 24.54.6; 3 R Poiree (Fr) 24.55.3; 4 F Luck (Ger) 25.00.6; 5 R Cattarinussi (It) 25.16.8; 6 O Ryzhenkov (Bela) 25.19.2; 7 S Azambre (Fr) 25.19.3; 8 S Rojkov (Rus) 25.22.9; 9 D Bjoerndalen (Nor) 25.23.6; 10 A Wolf (Ger) 25.25.0. **World Cup standings:** 1 Fischer 104; 2 Poiree 99; 3 P Rostovtsev (Rus) 97; 4 Bjorndalen 95; 5 Luck 94. (Osrblie, Slovak): **12.5km Pursuit:** 1 S Fischer (Ger) 33min 11.1sec; 2 R Poiree (Fr) at 43.7sec; 3 P Rostovtsev (Rus) 44.5; 4 F Luck (Ger) 46.7; 5 V Sashurin (Bela) 1.01.3; 6 S Azambre (Fr) 1.03.2; 7 V Hietalahti (Fin) 1.03.6, 8 R Cattarinussi (It) 1.23.5; 9 P Sendel (Ger) 1.26.6; 10 R Gross (Ger) 1.32.7. **World Cup standings:** 1 Fischer 134pts; 2 Poiree 125; 3 Rostovtsev 121; 4 Luck 116; 5 O E Bjoerndalen 110; 6 Ryzhenkov 101; 7 Hietalahti 88; 8 Cattarinussi 84; 9 Sashurin, 87; 10 Azambre 83. **Women** (7.5km): 1 S Greiner-Petter-Memm (Ger) 20min 33.2sec; 2 U Disl (Ger) 20.37.8; 3 L Grete Skjelbreid (Nor) 21.00.2; 4 M Forsberg (Swe) 21.02.2; 5 K Apel (Ger) 21.05.3; 6 C Niogret (Fr) 21.08.2; 7 G M Andreassen (Nor) 21.11.2; 8 S Ichmouratova (Rus) 21.11.4; 9 S Yu (China) 21.16.0; 10 D Heymann-Burlet (Fr) 21.18.3. **World Cup standings:** 1 Forsberg 132; 2 Disl 124; 3 Greiner-Petter-Memm 116; 4 Niogret 96; 5 Skjelbreid 82. (Osrblie, Slovak): **10km Pursuit:** 1 U Disl (Ger) 31min 26.5sec; 2 S Greiner-Petter-Memm (Ger) at 13.3sec; 3 K Apel (Ger) 15.8; 4 M Forsberg (Swe) 33.8; 5 A Henkel (Ger) 57.2; 6 A Akhatova (Rus) 1.08.4; 7 E Dafovska (Bul) 1.18.7; 8 D Heymann-Burlet (Fr) 1.25.8; 9 S Ichmouratova 1.26.2; 10 M Zellner (Ger) 1.26.8. **World Cup standings:** 1 Disl 154pts; 2 Forsberg 154; 3 Greiner-Petter-Memm 142; 4 C Niogret (Fr) 105; 5 Apel 100; 6 Zellner 97; 7 Skjelbreid 89; 8 Akhatova 86; 9 Henkel 81; 10 Andreassen 79.

BOBSLEIGH

WORLD CUP (La Plagne, France): **Four-man:** 1 Germany I 1min 55.30sec; 2 Switzerland I 1.55.78; 3 Germany III 1.55.82. **Also:** 7 Britain I (S Olsson, D Ward, A Lewis, E Sekwalor) 1.56.06.

BOXING

PROFESSIONAL BILL (Liverpool): **WBO Inter-continental Super Featherweight Title:** Gary Thornhill (Liverpool, holder) bt Steve Conway (Dewsbury) rsf 9.

CHESS

OXFORD GRANDMASTERS: Round Five: Ar J Hodgson 4; E Gausdel (Nor), M McDonald, J Nunn, M Turner 3; J Hector (Swe), E Sutovsky (Isr) 2½. B: S Ansell, Summerscale 3½; A Barsov (Uzb), C Crouch, K Arkell, T Wall 3. **Masters:** H Hunt 4½; L Cooper, R Bates, A Hunt 3½; G Ciolac (Rom), A Dunnington 2½.

CROSS-COUNTRY

IAAF WORLD CHALLENGE (Brussels): **Men** (10.5km): 1 R Limo (Ken) 32min 14sec; 2 H Mekonen (Eth) 32.15; 3 P Koech (Ken) 32.17. **Women** (6km): 1 G Wami (Eth) 20min 17sec; 2 A Sandell (Fin) 20.25; 3 A Worku (Eth) 20.34. **BRITISH CROSS CHALLENGE** (Cumbernauld, Glasgow): **Men** (8,000m): 1 A Pearson (Bingley) 26min 46sec; 2 D Banister (Shaftesbury Barnet) 26.48; 3 B Quinn (Kilbarchan) 27.05; 4 R Birchall (Birchfield) 27.19; 5 C Robison (Inverclyde) 27.23; 6 D Leggate (Fife) 27.54; 7 C Wood (Bristol) 28.01; 8 I Pearce (Tipton) 28.08; 9 D McNeilly (NI) 28.10; 10 A Puckrin (Tipton) 28.14. **Women** (6,000m): 1 V McPherson (City of Glasgow) 23min 04sec; 2 B Dagne (Essex) 23.06; 3 L Wright (Leeds) 23.20; 4 H Hassman (Altrincham) 23.30; 5 A Mudge (Carnethy) 23.39; 6 T Kryzwicki (Charnwood) 23.43; 7 J Ingham (Barnsley) 23.51; 8 L MacDougall (Glasgow) 24.02; 9 V Wilkinson (Bingley) 24.11; 10 L Talbot (Bedford) 24.21.

CRICKET

FIRST TEST (Dunedin): India v New Zealand abandoned due to rain. **THIRD TEST** (Faisalabad, Pak): Pakistan v Zimbabwe abandoned due to bad weather. Zimbabwe lead series 1-0. **TOUR MATCH** (Pietermaritzburg, SA: second day): West Indies 259-5 (S Chanderpaul 132no; Klusener 3-47) v South Africa A. **SHEFFIELD SHIELD** (second day): **Brisbane:** Queensland 164 and 127-7 (M Hayden 51). Tasmania 229 (D Hills 60, M DiVenuto 58; Bichel 4-102). **Perth:** South Australia 503-6 dec (D Fitzgerald 167, J Vaughan 157no, B Johnson 73). Western Australia 182-3 (J Langer 64). **Sydney:** New South Wales 360 (P Emery 58; Innes 4-66). Victoria 219-3 (B Hodge 120, M Mott 62).

EQUESTRIANISM

OLYMPIA INTERNATIONAL SHOW JUMPING CHAMPIONSHIPS (London): **Traxdata World Cup Qualifier:** 1 Virtual Village Grannusch (J Whitaker, GB) clear 28.47sec; 2 Poor Boy (B Maendli, Switz) clr 29.13; 3 Virtual Village Ashley (M Whitaker, GB) clr 30.68; 4 Calvaro V (W Melliger, Switz) clr 35.75; 5 Duif (L McNaught, Switz) clr 35.35; 6 Virtual Village It's Otto (G Billington, GB) 3 flts 41.82. **World Cup European League:** 1 B Maendli (Switz) 55pts; 2 T Coyle (Ire) 40; 3 M Whitaker (GB) 39; 4 J Tops (Neth) 32; 5= J Fisher (GB), R Bril (Neth), W Melliger (Switz) 27. **British:** 13= J Whitaker, N Skelton & R Smith all 20pts. **Traxdata Top Score:** 1 It's Me (L Beerbaum, Ger) 1340pts 56.78sec; 2 Nissan Calango Z (J Lansink, Neth) 1220 48.52; 3 Loro Piana Icamorka (J Smit, It) 1220 61.12; 4 Traxdata Glenwood Springs (T Stockdale, GB) 1170 54.16; 5 Gravur 004 (B Maendli, Switz) 1110 46.60; 6 Cornetto (L Pedersen, Den) 1040 55.83. **P&O Events Christmas Carol Stakes:** 1 San Patrignano Very (F Slootheak, Ger) 47.56sec; 2 *Loro Piana Leonidas (L Nieberg, Ger)* 49.78; 3 BB Corlanda (W Melliger, Switz) 49.80; 4 Virtual Village Do It (N Skelton, GB) 49.82; 5 Candy Floss (P Lejeune, Bel) 50.88; Peter Pan V (B Maendli, Switz) 51.30. **P&O Events Christmas Pudding Stakes:** 1 Bahimoor (Geir Gulliksen, Nor) 0 flts 29.38sec; 2 Landdame FRH (Franke Sloothaak, Ger) 0 31.09; 3 Loro Piana Cassandro (Jerry Smit, It) 0 38.61; 4 La Patron (Rene Tebbel, Ger) 4 30.35; 5 Virtual Village Showtime (Nick Skelton, GB) 4 30.69; 6 Casir Ask (Lars Pederson, Den) 4 34.73. **Vink Mistletoe Stakes:** 1 Senator Tees Hanauer (R Smith, GB) clr 48sec; 2 BB Corlanda (W Melliger, Switz) clr 47.16; 3 Valiska Forever (P Lejeune, Bel) clr 47.26; 4 Flaminka (D Lampard, GB) clr 48.24; 5 Loro Piana Leonidas (L Nieberg, Ger) clr 49.75; 6 Ultra Liberty (R Tebbel, Ger) clr 50.74. **Vink Masters:** 1 Loro Piana Albertino (L Nieberg, Ger); 2= *Champion de Lys (L Beerbaum, Ger)*, Virtual Village Randi (J Whitaker, GB); 4= *Helios (H Bourdy, Fr), Domina* 111 (W Melliger, Switz); 6 Vink Flower 111 (E van der Vleuten, Neth).

AMERICAN FOOTBALL

NFL: Washington 20 Tampa Bay 16; Buffalo 10 NY Jets 17.

HOCKEY

ASIAN GAMES (Bangkok): **Men: Final:** India 1 South Korea 1 (aet, 4-2 pens). **3-4 places:** Pakistan 3 Japan 0. **Women: Final:** South Korea 2 India 1. **ENGLISH INDOOR CHAMPIONSHIP: Divisional qualifiers: East** (Aldenham Sch): Blueharts 4 St Albans 4; Spalding 8 Chelmsford 8: Dunton 1 Loughtonians 12; St Albans 9 Spalding 4; Bluesharts 0 Dunton 4; Loughtonians 8 Chelmsford 2; Spalding 9 Bluesharts 3; Chelmsford 9 Dunton 6; St Albans 4 Loughtonians 4. **Saturday:** St Albans 6 Dunton Engineering 6; Bluesharts 4 Chelmsford 8; Spalding 7 Dunton 9; Old Loughtonians 8 Bluesharts 0; St Albans 5 Chelmsford 5; Spalding 4 Loughtonians 13. **Final standings:** 1 Loughtonians 13; 2 Dunton 9; 3 St Albans 8. **Midlands** (Birmingham): **Group A:** Mansfield 1 Barford T 16; Mansfield 0 Cannock 6, Barford T 9 Cannock 2. **Winners:** Barford T. **Group B:** Khalsa 5 South Notts 5: Leek 6 Khalsa 4; Bridgnorth 4 S Notts 1; Leek 5 S Notts 1; Bridgnorth 2 Leek 5; Bridgford 2 Khalsa 3. **Winners:** Leek. (Worcester): **Group C:** Harborne 13 Bromsgrove 2; Loughboro S 9 Harborne 6; Nottingham 10 Bromsgrove 3; *Loughboro S 15 Bromsgrove* 1; Loughboro S 7 Nottingham 5; Harborne 12 Nottingham 9. **Winners:** Loughboro. **Group D:** Stourport 8 Sikh Union 1 (Play abandoned during second match. Tournament abandoned). **North** (Peterlee): Stockton 3 Bankers 15; Norton 5 Hull 2; Doncaster 15 Stockton 2; Bankers 1 Norton 4; Hull 6 Doncaster 4. **Saturday:** Norton 8 Doncaster 5; Sheffield Bankers 1 Hull 3; Stockton 4 Norton 8; Doncaster 5 Bankers 7; Hull 14 Stockton 1. **Final Standings:** 1 Norton 12; 2 Hull 9; 3 S Bankers 6. **South** (Epsom): **Group A:** Purley OW 3 Lewes 11; Bromley 11 Purley 4; Lewes 6 Bromley 7. **Group B:** Maidenhead 8 Ramgarhia (Middx) 13; West London Inst 17 Maidenhead 9; Ramgarhia 6 West London Inst 11. **Group C:** Portsmouth 7 Old Bordenians 4; Eastcote 16 Portsmouth 4; Old Bordenians 8 Eastcote 10. **Group D:** Old Holcombeians 0 Southgate 12; City of Portsmouth 5 Holcombeians 3; Southgate 12 City of Portsmouth 7. **Semi-finals:** Bromley 3 Southgate 11; Eastcote 8 W Ldn Inst 9. **West & Services** (Larkhill): **Final:** Yeovil & Sherborne 5 Firebrands 13. **Qualifiers for National rounds:** Dunton Engineering, Firebrands, Hull, Norton, Old Loughtonians, Southgate, West London Inst. Yeovil & Sherborne. **SCOTTISH INDOOR LEAGUE** (Perth): Western 3 MIM 7; Dundee W 5 Menzieshill 4; Clydesdale 7 Inverleith 9; Grange 2 Gordonians 3; Western 3 Dundee W 5; MIM 8 Menzieshill 5; Clydesdale 5 Grange 5; Gordonians 5 Inverleith 8. **Standings:** 1 Dundee W 21; 2 MIM 19; 3 Menzieshill 13. **MEN'S REGIONAL LEAGUES: East:** B Stortford 1 Colchester 4; Ipswich 3 Crostyx 1. **Mid-winter standings:** 1 Ipswich 10-25; 2 Cambs Univ 10-22; 3 Peterborough 9-22. **South:** Beckenham 1 Purley Walcountians 1; Wokingham 2 City of Portsmouth 1. **Mid-winter standings:** 1 Fareham 11-18; 2 Beckenham 10-22; 3 Wimbledon 11-21. **Kent-/Sussex:** Ashford 6 S Saxons 0; Brighton 2 BBHC 1; Mid-Sussex 1 Sevenoaks 2. **MBO:** Richings Pk 4 Staines 5, Sonning 5 Phoenix 1.

ICE HOCKEY

SUPERLEAGUE: Cardiff 5 Ayr 2; Newcastle 1 Sheffield 5. **CHRISTMAS CUP:** Fife 4 Edinburgh 5 (ot); Milton Keynes 1 Kingston 8; Paisley 14 Perth 2; Slough 6 Chelmsford 2; Telford 2 Peterborough 4. **BALTIKA CUP** (Moscow): Sweden 5 Russia 3 (Sweden won Cup); Czech Rep 6 Canada 3. **NHL: Saturday:** Philadelphia 3 Chicago 1; Boston 4 Detroit 1; Montreal 1 New Jersey 1 (ot); Toronto 7 NY Rangers 4; Buffalo 2 Carolina 3; Florida 3 Edmonton 1; Pittsburgh 3 Washington 0; St Louis 5 Los Angeles 2; Vancouver 4 Nashville 6; San Jose 2 Colorado 1. **Friday:** Tampa Bay 1 Edmonton 4; Buffalo 4 Montreal 2; Detroit 1 Dallas 3; New Jersey 2 Calgary 5; Ottawa 5 Carolina 1; Anaheim 2 NY Islanders 2 (ot).

LUGE

WORLD CUP EVENT (Winterberg, Ger): **Men:** 1 G Hackl (Ger) 1min 50.486sec; 2 M Prock (Aut) 1.50.578; 3 A Heidt (US) 1.50.785; 4 N Huber (It) 1.50.935; 5 J Mueller (Aut) 1.50.948; 6 G Gleirscher (Aut) 1.51.075; 7 W Huber (It) 1.51.087; 8 R Rainer (It) 1.51.116; 9 A Zubkow (Rus) 1.51.166; 10 R Fegg (Ger) 1.51.248. **Leading World Cup standings:** 1 Hackl 309pts; 2 Prock 290; 3 Zoeggeler 287; 4 Huber 260; 5 Mueller 236; 6 Gleirscher 211. **Doubles:** 1 M Grimmette/B Martin (US) 1min 32.641sec; 2 T Schiegl/M Schiegl (Aut) 1.32.802; 3 P Leitner/A Resch (Ger) 1.33.052; 4 C Thorpe/G Sheer (US) 1.33.234; 5 A Florschuetz/T Wustlich (Ger) 1.33.366; 6 S Skel/S Woeller (Ger) 1.33.415; 7 G Plankensteiner/O Haselrieder (It) 1.33.483; 8 I Urbanski/A Muchin (Ukr) 1.33.661; 9 C Oberstolz/P Gruber (It) 1.33.839; 10 K Brugger/K Kofler (It) 1.33.930. **Leading standings:** 1 Grimette/Martin 312pts; 2 *Schiegl/Schiegl* 301; 3 C Niccum/M McLain (US) 266; 4 Plankensteiner-/Heselrieder 251; 5 Thorpe/Sheer 245; 6 Skel/Woeller 220; 7 Florschuetz/Wustlich 189; 8 Leitner/Resch 186; 9 L Mick/W Marx (Slovak) 115; 10 R Suharevs/D Leksis (Lat) 114. **Women:** 1 S Kraushaar (Ger) 1.33.789; 2 S Erdmann (Ger) 1.34.033; 3 B Niedernhuber (Ger) 1.34.061; 4 A Tagwerker (Aut) 1.34.098; 5 N Obkircher (It) 1.34.190; 6 S Otto (Ger) 1.34.207; 7 A Neuner (Aut) 1.34.213; 8 E Warren (US) 1.34.271; 9 I Galle (Lat) 1.34.407; 10 D Preindl (It) 1.34.616. **Leading standings:** 1 Otto 320pts; 2 Kraushaar 316; 3 Niedernhuber 301; 4 Erdmann 255; 5 Neuner 241; 6 Tagwerker 220; 7 Obkircher 181; 8 G Weissensteiner (It) 156; 9 Galle 150; 10 Preindl 131.

ALPINE SKIING

WORLD CUP (Alta Badia, It): **Men: Giant slalom:** 1 M Von Gruenigen (Switz) 2min 41.01sec; 2 P Holzer (It) 2.41.77; 3 A Schifferer (Aut) 2.42.26; 4 H Maier (Aut) 2.42.84; 5 R Salzgeber (Aut) 2.42.90; 6 C Mayer (Aut) 2.43.59; 7 S Locher (Switz) 2.43.85; 8 K A Aamodt (Nor) 2.43.94; 9 G Rocca (It) 2.44.34; 10 L Kjus (Nor) 2.44.46. **WORLD CUP** (Val Gardena, It): **Men: Downhill:** 1 K Ghedina (It) 2min 04.17sec; 2 L Kjus (Nor) 2.04.31; 3 W Franz (Aut) 2.04.45; 4 H Maier (Aut) 2.04.65; 5 K A Aamodt (Nor) 2.05.10; 6 A Schifferer (Aut) 2.05.22; 7 F Strobl (Aut) 2.05.27; 8 P Jaerbyn (Swe) 2.05.39; 9 P Ortlieb (Aut) 2.05.49; 10 H Knauss (Aut) 2.05.64. **WORLD CUP** (Veysonnaz, Switzerland): **Women: Downhill:** 1 A Meissnitzer (Aut) 1min 42.68sec; 2 R Cavagnoud (Fr) 1.43.00; 3 R Gotschl (Aut) 1.43.17; 4 C Rey-Bellet (Switz) 1.43.48; 5 F Masnada (Fr) 1.43.47; 6 H Gerg (Ger) 1.43.56; 7= B Perez (It), M Turgeon (Can) 1.43.66; 9 M Dorfmeister (Aut) 1.43.70; 10 R Hausl (Ger) 1.43.74. **Slalom:** 1 K Roten (Switz) 1min 28.81sec; 2 K Koznick (US) 1.29.31; 3 A Pearson (Swe) 1.29.62; 4 P Wiberg (Swe) 1.29.75; 5 T Bakke (Nor) 1.29.88; 6 S Egger (Aut) 1.29.93; 7 N Bokal (Sloven) 1.30.01; 8 A Flemmen (Nor) 1.30.13; 9 J Kostelic (Cro) 1.30.34; 10 U Hrovat (Sloven) 1.30.45. **Combined:** 1 Hilde Gerg (Ger) 3min 15.15sec; 2 M Ertl (Ger) 3.16.19; 3 T Gimle (Nor) 3.16.54; 4 J Kostelic (Cro) 3.17.11; 5 R Goetschl (Aut) 3.17.45; 6 F Masnada (Fr) 3.17.50; 7 A Meissnitzer (Aut) 3.19.58; 8 M Dorfmeister (Aut) 3.20.18; 9 C Borghi (Switz) 3.22.19; 10 B Perez (It) 3.22.25.

SKI JUMPING

WORLD CUP (Harrachov, Cz): **K120:** 1 J Ahonen (Fin) 252.8pts; 2 N Kasai (Japan) 246; 3 A Widhoelzl (Aut) 242.4; 4 M Aagheim (Nor) 241.2; 5 L Ottesen (Nor) 240.4; 6 T Ingebrigtsen (Nor) 240.3; 6 H Miyahira (Japan) 240.3. **Saturday:** 1 J Ahonen (Fin) 235.3pts; 2 R Hornschuh (Ger) 221.8; 3 K Funaki (Japan) 217.8; 4 O Magne Doennem (Nor) 211.4; 5 M Aagheim (Nor) 209.1; 6 C Duffner (Ger) 207.4. **Leading World Cup standings:** 1 M Schmitt (Ger) 540pts; 2 Ahonen 508; 3 Funaki 408; 4 S Hannawald (Ger) 233; 5 N Kasai (Japan) 232; 6 W Loitzl (Aut) 218.

NORDIC SKIING

WORLD CUP (Davos Switz): **Men 30km Classic:** 1 B Daehlie (Nor) 1hr 14min 49.2sec; 2 A Prokurorov (Rus) at 30.1sec; 3 M Botvinov (Aut) 1.25.8; 4 E Jevne (Nor) 1.30.5; 5 M Fredriksson (Swe) 1.39.2; 6 I Batory (Slovak) 1.42.1; 7 J Isometsa (Fin) 1.54.7, 8 A Stadlober (Aut) 2.08.8; 9 V Legotin (Rus) 2.12.7; 10 M Myllylae (Fin) 2.25.7. **Overall World Cup standings:** 1 Daehlie 380; 2 Fredriksson 276; 3 Elofsson 222; 4 Botvinov 196; 5 Isometsa 177; 6 Stadlober 132; 7 *Prokurorov* 130; 8 *Bjervig* 120; 9 T A Hetland (Nor) 107; 10 C Hoffmann (Aut) 98. **Cross-country relay** (4x5km): 1 Norway (E Bjervig/E Jevne/B Daehlie/T Arn Hetland) 1:38.48.2; 2 Sweden (A Bergstroem/N Jonsson/M Fredriksson/P Elofsson) at 0.3sec; 3 Austria (A Marent/A Stadlober/M Botvinov/A Walcher) 38.9; 4 Norway II 48.0; 5 Italy 1.34.3; 6 Russia 1.40.8; 7 Finland 2.03.7; 8 Italy II 2.22.3; 9 Sweden II 2.23.0; 10 Switzerland 3.54.5. **Women: 15km Classic:** 1 O Danilova (Rus) 41min 11.0sec; 2 B Martinsen (Nor) at 0.2sec; 3 L Lazutina (Rus) 11.6; 4 N Gavriljuk (Rus) 13.3. 5 S Nageikina (Rus) 16.1; 6 A Reztsova (Rus) 50.1; 7 K Smigun (Est) 1 09.5; 8 N Baranova (Rus) 1.20.2; 9 S Salonen (Fin) 1.29.7; 10 I Taranenko-Terella (Ukr) 1.37.2. **Overall World Cup standings:** 1 Martinsen 294pts, 2 K Neumannova (Cz) 285; 3 Gavriljuk 250; 4 Danilova 236, 5 A Ordina (Swe) 191; 6 Belmondo 187, 7 Smigun 175; 8 Lazutina 168; 9 Reztsova 131; 10 A Moen (Nor) 130. **Cross-country relay** (4x5km): 1 Russia (O Danilova/S Nageikina/L Lazutina/N Gavriljuk) 54min 32.1sec; 2 Italy (G Paruzzi/A Confortola/S Belmondo/S Valbusa) 55.19.7; 3 Russia II (M Lazskaja/N Baranova/J Tchepalova/A Reztsova) 55.23.8; 4 Finland 56.14.0; 5 Estonia 56.21.4; 6 Norway 56.27.0; 7 Sweden 56.41.0; 8 Switzerland 57.17.9; 9 Japan 57.19.8; 10 Norway II 57.20.4.

SNOOKER

IRISH OPEN (Dublin): **Semi-final:** A McManus (Scot) bt T Drago (Mlt) 6-3.

SPEED SKATING

WORLD CUP (Chunchon, S Kor): **Men: 500m:** 1 J Wotherspoon (Can) 36.99sec; 2 M Ireland (Can) 37.00; 3 M Kunzel (Ger) 37.01; 4 J Inoue (Japan) 37.09; 5 G Mjos (Nor) 37.10; 6 P Bouchard (Can) 37.25; 7 C FitzRandolph (US) 37.31; 8 Manabu Horii (Japan) 37.36; 9 H Shimizu (Japan) 37.39; 10= T Kuroiwa (Japen), J Sung-yeul (S Kor) 37.40. **1,000m:** 1 J Wotherspoon (Can) 1min 13.21sec; 2 A Sondral (Nor) 1.13.52; 3 J Parker (Can) 1.14.42; 4 J Hanninen (Fin) 1.14.55; 5 P Abratkiewicz (Pol) 1.14.60; 6 Choi Jae-bong (S Kor) 1.14.85, 7 M Ireland (Can) 1.14.89; 8= J Inoue (Japan), C FitzRandolph (US) 1.14.94; 10 Y Miyabe (Japan) 1.15.08. **Women: 500m:** 1 C LeMay-Doan (Can) 39.81; 2 E Sanmiya (Japan) 40.11; 3 M Garbrecht (Ger) 40.40; 4 R Xue (China) 40.61; 5 E T Holseth (Nor) 40.64; 6 M Wang (China) 40.68; 7 T Okazaki (Japan) 40.81; 8 C Witty (US) 40.82; 9= C Zummack (Ger), A Tonoike (Japan) 40.84. **1,000m:** 1 C Witty (US) 1.20.67; 2 M Garbrecht (Ger) 1.20.75; 3 C Le-May-Doan (Can) 1.21.25; 4 E Sanmiya (Japan) 1.22.11; 5 T Okazaki (Japan) 1.22.39; 6 E T Holseth (Nor) 1.22.49; 7 A Tonoike (Japan) 1.22.82; 8 A Sannes (US) 1.22.77; 9 C Simionato (It) 1.23 02; 10 C Zummack (Ger) 1.23.42.

SWIMMING

BRITISH SHORT COURSE CHAMPIONSHIPS (Glasgow): **Men: 100m freestyle:** 1 J Hickman (Leeds) 48.57sec; 2 S Brinn (Bath Univ) 48.96; 3 M Kidd (Leatherhead) 49.33. **1500m freestyle:** 1 G Smith (Stockport) 14min 46.36sec; 2 I Wilson (Leeds) 15.06.78; 3 G Orphanides (Portsmouth) 15.16.41. **100m breaststroke:** 1 D Mew (Bath Uni) 1min 0.70sec; 2 R Maden (Bath Univ) 1.02.20; 3 G Brettell (Bath Univ) 1.02.43. **200m breaststroke:** 1 A Whitehead (Coventry) 2min 10.03sec; 2 A Bree (Ulster) 2.14.26; 3 I Edmond (Edinburgh) 2.14.30. **100m backstroke:** 1 J Hickman (Leeds) 53.45sec; 2 N Willey (Bath Univ) 53.74; 3 S Parry (Liverpool) 54.15. **200m backstroke:** 1 K Saxton (Portsmouth) 2min 11.35sec, 2 K Jiggins (Coventry) 2.13.44; 3 C Carter (Braintree) 2.14.72. **50m butterfly:** 1 M Jones (Ealing) 24.55sec (Welsh rec); 2 G Phillips (Havant & Waterlooville) 24.69; 3 S Mavin (Loughborough Univ) 24.95. **100m butterfly:** 1 C Foot (York) 1min 1.18sec; 2 N Jackson (Derwentside) 1.01.47 (GB jun rec); 3= M Pedder (Portsmouth), G Loo (Camphill Edwardians) 1.01.77. **200m butterfly:** 1 D Wigg (Newcastle) 2.00.08, 2 E Clement (Killerwhales) 2.01.24; 3 C Jones (Newcastle) 2.01.49. **100m individual medley:** 1 N Poole (Portsmouth) 57.20; 2 P Pote (Bath Univ) 57.90; 3 D Carry (Aberdeen) 58.58. **200m individual medley:** 1 S Parry (Liverpool) 2min 0.79sec; 2 B Lummis (Ipswich) 2.03.38; 3 B Harkin (Warrington) 2.03.45. **4x100m medley relay:** 1 Bath Univ 3min 38.72sec; 2 Edinburgh 3.43.42; 3 Loughborough Univ 3.46.37. **Women: 50m freestyle:** 1 A Sheppard (Milngavie & Bearsden) 25.10sec; 2 S Hopkins (Loughborough Uni) 25.35; 3 C Davies (Leeds) 26.09. **200m freestyle:** 1 C Huddart (Leeds) 1min 58.61sec; 2 K Pickering (Ipswich) 1.59.23; 3 V Horner (Stockport Metros) 2.00.52. **400m freestyle:** 1 K Legg (Ferndown) 4 09.75, 2 V Horner (Stockport) 4 10.62; 3 C Smart (Millfield) 4 11.55. **100m breaststroke:** 1 L Hindmarsh (Leeds) 1 9.68; 2 H Earp (Nova Centurion) 1.09.92; 3 E Dutton (Leeds) 1.11.82. **50m backstroke:** 1 K Sexton (Portsmouth) 29.33; 2 K Jiggins (Coventry) 29.59; 3 Z Cray (Ipswich) 29.59. **100m individual medley:** 1 D Borland (Ren 96) 1 04.92; 2 K Evans (Nova Centurion) 1.05.41; 3 J Lyes (Hillingdon) 1.05.10. **200m individual medley:** 1 S Rolph (Newcastle) 2.13.08; 2 K Evans (Nova Centurion) 2.18.80; 3 S Nesbit (Portsmouth) 2.19.74. **4x100m medley relay:** 1 Loughborough Univ 4min 17.22sec; 2 Newcastle 4.17.56; 3 Nova Centurion 4.18.12. **4x100m relay:** 1 Loughborough Univ 3.46.20; 2 Nova Centurion 3.46.44; 3 City of Newcastle 3.50.44.

Fixtures

FOOTBALL

FA CARLING PREMIERSHIP: Charlton v Aston Villa (8.0).
FA VASE: Third round: Barkingside v Oldbury Utd.
RYMAN LEAGUE: Premier Division: Purfleet v Sutton Utd (7.30). **Puma Cup: Second round:** Boreham Wood v Canvey Island.
N-W TRAINS LEAGUE: Floodlit Trophy: First-round, second leg: Atherton Colls v Warrington Tn.
PONTINS LEAGUE: Second Division: Newcastle v Shrewsbury (2.0). **Third Division:** Wigan v Bury (2.0). **Cup: Group Two:** Barnsley v York (7.0). **Group Three:** Man City v West Brom (7.0).
AVON INSURANCE COMBINATION: First Division: Cambridge v Brentford (2.0); Luton v Tottenham (2.0); Reading v Millwall (7.30).

Racing

King George VI Chase winner in good shape for repeat bid at Kempton on Boxing Day. **Chris Hawkins** reports

Nicholls completes business plan

SEE MORE BUSINESS is 9–4 favourite with Coral's to repeat last year's success in the King George VI Chase at Kempton on Boxing Day, for which 12 have been declared including Teeton Mill, rated a 3–1 chance, and Imperial Call, quoted at 4–1.

Paul Nicholls, trainer of See More Business, expressed satisfaction with the current well-being of his eight-year-old, who should be at the peak of his career now.

"I'm pleased with the way he's come on since his Chepstow run and everything is going to plan," said Nicholls. "Provided it goes on raining I'm pretty sure he'll take all the beating."

See More Business did not impress everyone when defeating Dom Samourai in a three-horse race for the Rehearsal Chase at Chepstow, but he was giving 21lb to the second and time may prove that to have been a very smart performance.

Dom Samourai is 3–1 favourite with the sponsors for the Coral Welsh National on December 28, a race in which Nicholls is likely to run 10–1 chance Torduff Express provided he recovers from his exertions in winning Saturday's Betterware Cup at Ascot.

"He stays all day and is tough so if he's fit and well he'll go for the Welsh National," said Nicholls after saddling his 50th winner of the campaign. "Saturday was the first time we'd got him down to his right racing weight this season and he's in tip-top shape."

Torduff Express oustayed his rivals in the Betterware Cup and after Tamarindo, the favourite, had been pulled up there was never any real threat to him in the last half mile.

Tamarindo, carring a big weight in soft ground, was having his second race in eight days and seemed a tired horse according to trainer Martin Pipe, who was told by Tony McCoy that the horse was never travelling sweetly.

Pipe's Cyfor Malta is out of the King George, having had too little time to recover from the setback which caused him to miss the Tripleprint Gold Cup at Cheltenham. Challenger Du Luc and Cyborgo are his entries for the Kempton showpiece, although the latter is very doubtful, having run poorly on his comeback in the Long Walk Hurdle.

This was not the case with the stable's Deano's Beeno, who very nearly succeeded in making all the running over this marathon three miles and a furlong. Turning for home Deano's Beeno had burned off all bar Princeful, but there is no gamer horse in training than Jenny Pitman's hurdler. In a stirring set-to, Princeful got up to win by half a length, answering every call from Richard Dunwoody.

"The jockey's got off and said that the horse got to the bottom of him, but for sure Richard never got to the bottom of the horse," gasped a breathless Mrs P, who always lives every second of her animals' races.

"He's got so much courage it's unbelievable and when it comes to guts I'd put him up there with Corbiere, Royal Athlete and Garrison Savannah.

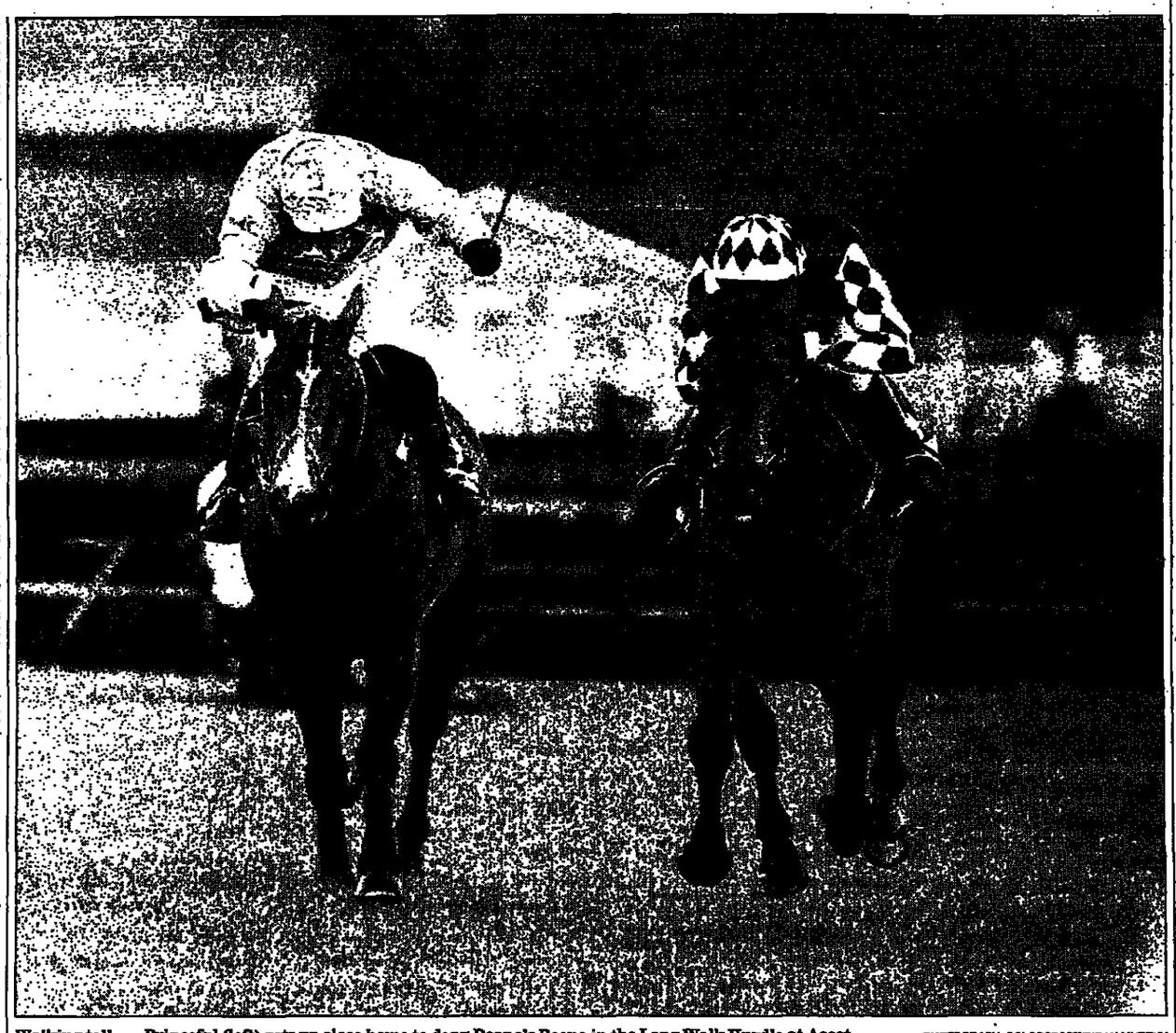
"That'll probably be the end of hurdling for him now as I want to run him in the Sun Alliance Chase at the Festival in March and the Gold Cup the following year. He schooled nicely over fences last Tuesday."

Nicky Henderson revealed Cheltenham plans for Hidebound after his novice had taken the Kennel Gate Hurdle with the minimum of fuss.

"He's very, very good — he goes left or right handed and handles soft ground," said Henderson about the Buckskin gelding. "We seriously thought about going straight over fences with him this season, but I'm glad we didn't and the Sun Alliance Hurdle could be the race for him at Cheltenham."

Henderson's horses have been in great form for the last month or so and the Lambourn trainer saddled another exciting prospect in Get Real, who won the Frogmore Handicap Chase with a bold display of jumping from the front.

Josh Gifford has been in the doldrums for much of the season, but Kurakka lifted his spirits with an impressive display in the "Book Of Music" Novice Chase. The sky could be the limit for this gelding by Florida Son, the sire of current Gold Cup favourite Florida Pearl.



Walking tall . . . Princeful (left) gets up close home to deny Deano's Beeno in the Long Walk Hurdle at Ascot PHOTOGRAPH: COLORSPORT/PIRAN MURPHY

Dunwoody favourite to get the call for Imperial

Chris Hawkins

RIDING plans for Ireland's King George VI Chase challenger Imperial Call are expected to be settled this morning with the names of Richard Dunwoody, Jamie Osborne and Ruby Walsh in the hat.

The problem of finding a jockey for the 1996 Cheltenham Gold Cup winner in Kempton's Boxing Day feature arose after his regular rider Paul Carberry was claimed by Noel Meade to ride at Leopardstown. Dunwoody was the first choice of trainer Raymond Hurley, but it is not certain yet that he will be riding at Kempton as he has a retainer with leading owner Robert Ogden.

Robert Parsons, Dunwoody's agent, explained the situation: "If Richard is at Kempton then he will ride Imperial Call — he would certainly like to.

"It looks as if Mr Ogden's hurdler Davoski (trained by Venetia Williams) will run at the meeting, in which case Richard will be there. But as yet no final plans have been made."

Jamie Osborne has apparently also been approached by Hurley, but he seems likely to ride Coome Hill, his regular mount, who has been declared by Walter Dennis.

Osborne has a soft spot for Coome Hill, on whom he won the Hennessy Gold Cup two seasons ago and more recently the John Durkan Chase at Ascot on his comeback after an absence of nearly a year from the saddle.

The other name in the frame is that of Ruby Walsh, who is currently vying for the lead with Carberry in the Irish jump jockeys' title race, but he too may be claimed to ride at Leopardstown.

All in all it is a real headache for Hurley, but the shrewd money is on Dunwoody, who will be anxious to improve on his wonderful record in the King George, a race he has already won four times — twice on One Man and twice on Desert Orchid.

Imperial Call was trained by Fergie Sutherland when he won the Gold Cup. He suffered a loss of form last year, but Hurley seems to have coaxed him back to his best and he jumped well when notching his latest victory at Punchestown recently when beating Dorans Pride to make it three wins out of four runs this season.

Connections of The Grey Monk, 20–1 for the King George, are favouring a tilt at the Rowland Meyrick Handicap Chase at Wetherby instead.

"If it came a deluge at Kempton then he would go for the King George," said Nicky Richards, trainer of The Grey Monk, yesterday. "But if we don't get the rain then he'll probably run at Wetherby. He's a big, long-striding staying horse and Kempton may not suit him.

"He's also in the Welsh National at Chepstow, but he may finish up with a big weight there and I wouldn't be keen on running him in what could be a slog."

The Rowland Meyrick has attracted a strong field, with Suny Bay and Macgeorge also figuring among the 13 five-day acceptors.

Sihafi on course to break record

SIHAFI has a good chance of breaking the 20th century record for the most Flat handicap victories in a year when he lines up for the 49's Handicap over six furlongs at Lingfield this afternoon, *writes Chris Hawkins*.

Rivalling Sihafi in the race for the record today is Soaked — both horses have won nine handicaps — but David Chapman's sprinter looks unfavourably drawn on the wide outside at number 14.

Sihafi (2.40), trained by David Nicholls, is well placed in stall one and if he can hold his place round the tight Lingfield turns must be in the firing line at the finish.

The Elmaamul gelding came desperately close to the record five days ago when going down by a short-head to Pride of Brixton (Soaked finished sixth) at Wolverhampton.

But Lingfield is one of his favourite tracks and he has already won here four times, three of them over today's distance of six furlongs.

Karl Burke's Night City is another remarkable performer and goes for his 11th win of the year in the Christmas Apprentice Handicap.

He has been shrewdly placed with seven of his wins coming in claimers, but with 10st 7lb appears to have plenty of weight this afternoon and giving two stone to the locally-trained Waasef (12.40) may prove just beyond him.

● Today's scheduled meeting at Kelso was called off because of frost following an inspection yesterday.

KEEPING TRACK

09064 700 +

	COMMENTARY	RESULTS
KELSO	141	151
LINGFIELD	142	152

ALL COURSES COMMENTARY 09064 700 140

ALL COURSES RESULTS 09064 700 150

TheGuardian INTERACTIVE

Lingfield all-weather Jackpot card

	CHRIS HAWKINS	TOP FORM
12.40	Waasef	Night City (nb)
1.10	Shoebalino	Mazzeo
1.40	Barr Beacon	Prince Consort
2.10	Lady Caroline (nb)	Polly Millie
2.40	Sihafi (nap)	Prime Lara
3.10	Barrier Ridge	Browning (nap)
3.40	Rainstorm	Rainstorm

All-weather, Equitrack, left-handed course laid out inside turf track and only 1¼m round. No straight sprint track.
Going: Standard. ★ Denotes blinkers. ● Top form rated.
Draw: Low numbers favoured.
Seven-day winners: None.
Blinkered first time: 1.40 Kayo Gee. Visored: 2.10 College Blue.
Figures in brackets after horse's name denote days since last outing. J.Jumps.

12.40 CHRISTMAS APPRENTICE HANDICAP
1m 5f £1,737 (6 declared)

701 (6) 001101 **Night City** (14) (CD) K Burke 7–10–7 ..... P Doe ●(6)
702 (5) 655323 Opera Buff (14) (CD) Miss G Kelloway 7–10–0 ..... P Goode (3) 97
703 (1) 026211 Waasef (10) (CD) Miss G Kelloway 5–8–7 ..... P Frederiks (3) 99
704 (3) 271306 Mentref (8) P Evans 5–8–6 ..... C Cogan (3) 95
705 (2) 055650 Merry Prince (JD) (BF) P Hedger 3–8–4 ..... A Pell 95
706 (4) 600-0 Inn On The Park (268) S Dow 3–7–10 ..... R Bristowe (3) 82

Betting: 15–8 Waasef, 9–4 Night City, 4–1 Opera Buff, 8–1 Mentref, 7–1 Merry Prince, 16–1 Inn On The Park.

FORM GUIDE – Night City: Led, hard ridden and headed over 3f out, led 2f out, green clear, was by 5l from Tougues Rhiecs, with Opera Buff (nc 4lb) 3rd of 12, bln 6l, at Lingfield 1m4f hcap, AW. Waasef: Prominent, chased leader over 5f out, led 2f out, ran on well, won by ak from Alka at Lingfield 1m5f hcap, AW. Mentref: Held up, not clear run 2f out, ran on well final furlong, 5th of 11, 4lb beaten Rangitata D'Or at Wolverhampton 1m4f hcap, AW. Merry Prince: Always behind, 12th of 16, 2¾ beaten Nuvellino at Nottingham 1m2f hcap, St. Inn On The Park: Ridden over 4f out, always behind, 7th of 11, 25l behind New Abbey at Salisbury 1m4f mdn, Gd-St.

1.10 EASAL HANDICAP (DIV I)
1m 2f £2,859 (14 declared)

201 (14) 102343 **Mazzeo** (8) (CD) P Evans 5–10–0 ..... C Cogan (7) ★ ●98
202 (9) 504222 Elistasio (14) (BF) Miss G Kelloway 3–9–11 ..... P Frederiks (7) 97
203 (12) 241225 Bank On Him (27) (BF) G L Moore 3–9–10 ..... J Quinn 88
204 (7) 000803 **Shoebalino** (12) (C) P Makin 3–9–8 ..... A Clark 89
205 (10) 053605 Solfatia (18) D Haydn Jones 4–9–4 ..... S Whitworth 84
206 (11) 150000 Shoestring (12) (C) M Johnston 5–8–3 ..... R Fitzpatrick (5) 85
207 (1) 000000 Consent (63) D Chapman 3–8–10 ..... A Culhane 78
208 (3) 4-0010 Prince Minor (12) R Armstrong 3–8–8 ..... R Price 79
209 (13) 650220 Tornadale (C) C South 4–8–2 ..... F Norton 83
210 (8) 00/60- Golden Fawn (718) M Haynes 5–8–1 ..... J Lowe 77
211 (6) 230500 San Giovanni Melody (22) R Ingram 4–7–12 ..... G Baxter(5) 84
212 (5) 0-0066 Pippas Pride (24) M Pomfrett-Godley 3–7–10 ..... P Doe 83
213 (4) 0-0000 Woodaboy (12) J R Poulton 4–7–10 ..... R Bristowe (7) 77
214 (2) 430000 Mezzoramio (20) K Morgan 6–7–10 ..... A Pell (5) ★ 77

Betting: 4–1 Elistasio, 11–2 Mazzeo, Bank On Him, 7–1 Solfatia, 8–1 Shoebalino, Shoestring, 10–1 Tornadale, 14–1 Pippas Pride, 16–1 San Giovanni Melody, Mezzoramio

FORM GUIDE – Mazzeo: In touch, outpaced 3f out, stayed on well final furlong, 3rd of 13, 1¾l behind Failed To Hit at Wolverhampton 1m1f hcap, AW. Elistasio: Held up, chased winner over 3f out, ridden over 2f out, unable to quicken, 2nd of 10, 1¾l behind Totem at Lingfield 1m2f mdn, AW. Bank On Him: In touch, ran on one pace a the straight, 5th of 11, 6l behind First Master at Lingfield 1m2f app hcap, AW. Shoebalino: Chased leader, led over 2f out until over 1f out, unable to quicken, 3rd of 13, 2¾l behind Byzantium, with Shoestring (nr. 10lb) 12th, bln 26l, at Lingfield 1m2f hcap, AW. Solfatia: In touch, headway 5f out, hard driven 3f out, gradually weakened, 5th of 12, 16l behind Tropical Beach at Wolverhampton 1m1f hcap, AW. Consent: Soon behind, 12th of 15, 20l behind Love Academy at Southwell 1m app hcap, AW. Prince Minor: Always behind, 10th of 11, 21l behind Fiddi at Lingfield 7f hcap, AW. Tornadale: Held up, headway over 1f out, kept on inside final furlong, never nearer, 6th of 13, behind Prospector's Cove at Lingfield 1m2f hcap, AW. Golden Fawn: Never better than the mid-division, 15th of 16, 25l behind Tonka at Nottingham 1m2f hcap, Gd-St. San Giovanni Melody: Headway over 4f out, weakened over 1f out, 6th of 13, 14l behind Barbec Dwarry at Brighton 1m mdn, Gd. Pippas Pride: Soon struggling, 6th of 8, 27l behind Tumbleweed Hero at Lingfield 1m mdn, AW. Woodaboy: Always behind, 9th of 12, 10l behind Meadow Leader at Lingfield 7f sell, AW. Mezzoramio: Chased leaders, soon pushed along, weakened final 3f, 11th of 16, 21l behind ridy Smoke at Southwell 1m hcap, AW

1.40 BEST WISHES TO ALL RACEGOERS MEDIAN AUCTION MAIDEN STAKES 2YO
5f £2,085 (7 declared)

301 (6) 00 **Barr Beacon** (20) T Mills 9–0 ..... L Carter 88
302 (5) 00 **Catchthatbatch** (20) E Wheeler 9–0 ..... S Eskens (7) 84
303 (3) 245002 **Prince Consort** (87) (BF) S C Williams 9–0 ..... Dane O'Neill ★ ●88
304 (7) **Isla Orbit** W Haggas 8–9 ..... W Ryan —
305 (1) 0500 **Kayo Gee** (18) A Hinton 8–9 ..... T Sprake ★ 85
306 (2) 000 **Kenalbeen** (26) (BF) R Ingram 8–9 ..... A Clark 88
307 (4) 50000 **Middle** (2) P Evans 8–9 ..... C Cogan (7) ★ 97

Betting: 2–1 Prince Consort, 7–2 Barr Beacon, 4–1 Isla Orbit, Middle, 8–1 Catchthatbatch, 10–1 Kayo Gee, 16–1 Kenalbeen Girl.

FORM GUIDE – Barr Beacon: In touch, outpaced final 2f, 6th of 13, 4¾l behind Rennes, with Catchthatbatch (nr. 7lb) 9th, bln 6l, at Wolverhampton 5f mdn, AW. Prince Consort: Prominent, hard ridden over 1f out, ran on inside final furlong, 2nd of 16, 3l behind Helen's Stardust at Folkestone 5f claim, Gd-Fm. Kayo Gee: Speed over 3f, 7th of 8, 6l behind Xayma at Lingfield 6f hcap, AW. Kenalbeen Girl: Behind final 3f, last of 8, 24l behind Valentine Waltz at Brighton 7f mdn, Gd. Middle: Prominent when hampered on bends over 4f out, soon lost touch, 11th of 12, behind Seral Tag at Lingfield 6f claim, AW.

2.10 HAPPY CHRISTMAS EVERYONE NURSERY HANDICAP 2YO
6f £2,832 (9 declared)

401 (7) 26421 **Astrakan** (68) W Jarvis 9–7 ..... D Richards (7) 88
402 (1) 422330 **Prince Prospect** (68) Mrs L Stubbs 9–4 ..... S Whitworth 85
403 (9) 451224 **Polly Millie** (3) P Evans 8–3 ..... G Cogan (7) ★ ●80
404 (5) 261 **Russian** (30) M Channon 8–12 ..... A Culhane 85
405 (6) 2305 **College Blue** (10) T Mills 8–11 ..... L Carter ★ 87
406 (4) 2000202 **Lady Caroline** (14) M Johnston 8–1 ..... J Fanning 87
407 (3) 000534 **Just Wiz** (18) (BF) Lord Huntingdon 7–10 ..... G Bardwell ★ 87
408 (8) 010500 **Diamond Geezer** (12) R Hannon 7–10 ..... L Newman (7) 88
409 (2) 000300 **Compton Abba** (63) G A Butler 7–10 ..... J Quinn 84

Betting: 5–2 Russian, 9–2 Polly Millie, 5–1 Astrakan, Just Wiz, 8–1 Prince Prospect, College Blue, Lady Caroline, 12–1 Diamond Geezer, 14–1 Compton Abba

FORM GUIDE – Astrakan: With leader, led halfway, stayed on final furlong, won by 1¾l from Get Stuck at Catterick 5f mdn, St. Prince Prospect: Always in rear, 15th of 16, 12l behind Peggy Bank at Haydock 5f hcap, St. Polly Millie: With leaders, ridden halfway, kept on same pace, 4th of 10, 3l behind Arbright Boy at Southwell 5f hcap, AW. Russian: Chased leaders, led and hung left over 1f out, soon clear, won by 2l from Flying Officer at Wolverhampton 5f mdn, AW. Lady Caroline: Was winner until ridden and weakened well over 1f out, 2nd of 10, 10l behind Flying Officer at Lingfield 6f mdn aucs, AW. Just Wiz: Last place over 2f out, mildly tried final furlong, ran on well, 4th of 8, 1l behind Xayma, with College Blue (gve 17lb) 5th, bln 20l, at Lingfield 6f hcap, AW. Diamond Geezer: Always prominent, led briefly 5f out, weakened over 2f out, 10th of 12, 15l behind Love Diamonds at Lingfield 7m hcap, AW.

2.40 49'S HANDICAP (SHOWCASE RACE)
6f £7,198 (14 declared)

501 (13) 2001102 **Prime Lara** (39) (D) P Harris 6–10–0 ..... P Roberts (5) ●96
502 (4) 000500 **Bold Effort** (28) (CD) K C Bravon 6–9–9 ..... Dane O'Neill ★ 94
503 (3) 305004 **Apollo Red** (2) (CD) G L Moore 6–9–6 ..... Candy Morris 96
504 (8) 000101 **Speedy Classic** (22) (CD) M Haynes-Ellis 9–9–6 ..... A Clark 97
505 (5) 050004 **Rocco** (24) (D) B Palling 3–9–3 ..... G Faulkner (3) 90
506 (14) 021146 **Scotsol** (6) (CD) D Chapman 5–8–1 ..... A Culhane 87
507 (1) 100202 **Silsafi** (5) (CD) D Nicholls 5–8–13 ..... P Bowie (7) 97
508 (10) 211103 **Krystal Max** (16) (CD) T Barron 5–8–11 ..... Kimberley Hart (5) 95
509 (12) 203463 **Jarrod** (5) (C) (D) J Bradley 4–8–10 ..... C Carver (7) 85
510 (11) 2241 **Aoife** (27) (CD) G Wragg 3–8–8 ..... W Ryan 88
511 (6) 501003 **Thats Life** (24) (D) T Mills 3–8–7 ..... L Carter 89
512 (2) 030462 **Ziggy's Dancer** (26) (C) (D) E Alston 7–8–6 ..... J Quinn 94
513 (9) 242122 **Ellway Prince** (8) (CD) (BF) Mrs N Macauley 3–8–5 ..... G Carter ★ 85
514 (7) 000000 **Scissor Ridge** (20) (D) J Bridger 5–8–3 ..... G Bardwell 83

Best early-morning prices: 5–1 Silsafi (-, 7). 6–1 Aoife (4, 1). 7–1 Thats Life (C), 8–1 Ellway Prince (C), 10–1 Scotsol (4), Prime Lara (6), 12–1 Jarrod (C), 14–1 Rocco (C), Ziggy's Dancer (-), Speedy Classic (general), Krystal Max (C, 1), 25–1 Apollo Red (C, 1), 33–1 Bold Effort (general), Scissor Ridge (general).
(-, (BBB's), C (Carroll, T (Eddy), L (Leatherbarrow).

FORM GUIDE – Prime Lara: Tracked leaders, led 2f out to over 1f out, ran on well, 2nd of 12, 3l behind Nonsore Mr Nicagoy, with Bold Effort (gve 5lb) last, bln 30l, at Wolverhampton 7f hcap, AW. Apollo Red: Led, headed 3f out, weakened over 1f out, 4th of 8, 5l behind Nonsore Mr Nicagoy at Lingfield 1m also, AW. Speedy Classic: Led after 2f, pushed out, won by 2l from Silent Pride at Lingfield 1m claim, AW. Silsafi: Ridden and headway over 3f out, every chance inside final furlong, ran on, 2nd of 10, 2¾l behind Pride Of Britain, with Jarrod (nr. 3lb) 3rd, bln 3¼, Sunland (heels) 5th, bln 6l, at Wolverhampton 5f app hcap, AW. Krystal Max: Led until headed and no extra inside final furlong, 3rd of 13, 2l behind Royal Cascade at Wolverhampton 6f claim, AW. Aoife: Made all, clear over 1f out, ran on well, won by 6l from Moss at Lingfield 6f mdn, AW. Thats Life: Pulled hard, headway over 1f out, ran on well, 3rd of 13, 1¾l behind Stoshed (gve 5lb), with Jarrod (gve 7 11lb) 4th, bln 2l, at Lingfield 6f hcap, AW. Ziggy's Dancer: Always prominent, ran on one pace final 2f, 2nd of 13, 2¾l behind Gold Venture at Wolverhampton 6f hcap, AW. Ellway Prince: Ridden 3f out, ran on final furlong, 2nd of 11, 1¾l behind Pride Of Britain at Wolverhampton 6f hcap, AW. Scissor Ridge: Always pressurised, led over 4f out until over 3f out, weakened over 2f out, 7th of 19, 13l behind Be Warned at Newbury 7f app hcap, St.

3.10 EASAL HANDICAP (DIV 2)
1m 2f £2,859 (14 declared)

601 (1) 644 **Aston Villa** (28) D Elsworth 4–9–13 ..... P Goode (7) 82
602 (2) 0-2316 **Slick Tarpin** (JD) (CD) B Smart 4–9–11 ..... B Perkham 88
603 (8) 000540 **Rainbow Rain** (12) (C) S Dow 4–9–6 ..... P Doe (5) 86
604 (9) 220641 **Browning** (33) Lord Huntingdon 3–9–5 ..... W Ryan ●90
605 (5) 52885- **Double Flight** (178) Miss B Sanders 4–9–4 ..... A Clark 88
606 (10) 044000 **Tribal Peace** (28) (CD) B Gubby 6–9–1 ..... A Pell (5) 84
607 (13) 000300 **Silver Groom** (JD) M Channon 8–8–10 ..... Candy Morris 85
608 (3) 0458-0 **Noble Hero** (242) K Morgan 4–8–4 ..... R Winston (3) 82
609 (7) 000030 **Barrier Ridge** (12) (BF) G L Moore 4–8–1 ..... J Fanning 81
610 (11) 042442 **Glamor Morris** (2) C Booth 3–7–13 ..... J Quinn 83
611 (12) -31420 **Mommy's Music** (26) (C) M Madgwick 6–7–12 ..... J Lowe 83
612 (6) 400043 **Wild Hattie** (14) J Fox 4–7–10 ..... Darren O'Shea 84
613 (4) 124016 **Sammy's Shuffle** (22) (D) R Flower 3–7–10 ..... R Cochrane ★ 86
614 (14) 300005 **Fellenberg** (24) B Preece 3–7–10 ..... F Norton 83

Betting: 5–2 Browning, 4–1 Dick Tarpin, 8–1 Aston Villa, Rainbow Rain, 10–1 Tribal Peace, Silver Groom, 12–1 Mommy's Music, 14–1 Sammy's Shuffle, Noble Hero

FORM GUIDE – Aston Villa: Headway 6f out, chased winner over 1f out, one pace, 4th of 12, 6l behind Key Academy at Bath 1m4f mdn, Gd-Fm. Slick Tarpin: Some headway over 4f out, soon weakened, 6th of 8, 22l behind Brilliant Red at Lingfield 1m2f hcap, AW. Rainbow Rain: Never nearer, 8th of 13, 12l behind Byzantium at Lingfield 1m2f hcap, AW. Browning: Headway 4f out, led over 2f out, all out, won by ak from Flying Bold at Windsor 1m4f mdn, Fm. Double Flight: Tracked leaders, effort and ridden 2f out, kept on one pace, 5th of 18, 6l behind Ile Dolard at Nottingham 1m2f stks, Gd-Fm. Tribal Peace: Prominent 5f, 10th of 14, 22l behind Chairmans Choice at Lingfield 1m2f app hcap, AW. Silver Groom: Always prominent, hard ridden over 1f out, one pace, 7th of 13, 5l behind Mary Quit at Sandown 1m2f app hcap, Gd. Noble Hero: Close up, led after 3f until over 1f out, weakened 5f out, last of 8, 43l behind Dalebrook at Southwell 1m4f mdn aucs stks, AW. Barrier Ridge: Headway over 3f out, weakened 2f out, 7th of 12, 8l behind Meadow Leader at Lingfield 7f sell, AW. Glamor Morris: Prominent, led halfway, headed 1f out, unable to quicken, 2nd of 14, 2l behind Castles Dancing at Lingfield 1m2f hcap, AW. Mommy's Music: Chased leaders over 6f, 7th of 15, 8l behind Wassef at Lingfield 1m4f app hcap, AW. Wild Hattie: Raced very wide, well behind until good headway 2f out, stayed on, 3rd of 12, 7¾l behind Raspberry Sauce at Lingfield 1m 8s hcap, AW. Sammy's Shuffle: Prominent, led over 2f out until over 1f out, upon beaten, 6th of 22, 6l behind Marsiko Machine at Newmarket 1m11 app hcap, Gd-St. Fellenberg: Led 1f, soon lost place, rallied over 3f out, one pace, 5th of 14, 12l behind Sand Cay at Lingfield 1m2f sell, AW.

3.40 SEASONS GREETINGS MAIDEN STAKES
7f £2,788 (14 declared)

1 (6) 000 **Penglen** (28) M Madgwick 3–8–0 ..... T Sprake 77
2 (1) 304008 **Inspector** (12) G L Moore 3–8–0 ..... J Fanning 87
3 (8) 55 **Minstrels** (24) Miss G Kelloway 3–8–0 ..... S Whitworth 88
4 (3) 0-5 **Primestick** (27) S Dow 3–8–0 ..... R Smith (7) 88
5 (12) 0052 **Rainstorm** (24) C Dwyer 3–8–0 ..... J Quinn ●86
6 (5) 400000 **Sahara Rain** (177) M Tompkins 3–8–0 ..... G Faulkner (3) ★ 83
7 (7) 5-0550 **Stardom** (12) R Hannon 3–8–0 ..... Dane O'Neill 84
8 (9) 0033 **Social Record** (27) T Powell 3–8–0 ..... T G McLaughlin 83
9 (10) 466000 **Tales** (69) B Gubby 4–9–0 ..... A Clark ★ 77
10 (11) 0 **Kinross** (57) J Noseda 3–8–0 ..... G Carter 76
11 (4) 05306 **La Petite Flamenche** (29) R O'Sullivan 3–8–0 ..... P Doe (5) 87
12 (13) 400020 **Marlissa** (14) T Clement 3–8–0 ..... A Pell (5) 85
13 (14) 0-0346 **Queen's Nut** (187) (BF) J Bridger 3–8–0 ..... G Bardwell 86
14 (2) 006025 **Silent Pride** (14) G L Moore 3–8–0 ..... Candy Morris 86

Betting: 5–2 Rainstorm, 9–2 Social Record, 5–1 La Petite Flamenche, 8–1 Marsiko, Kinross, 12–1 Santana, Dawn's Hut, Silent Pride, 16–1 Tales, Primestick

FORM GUIDE – Penglen: Prominent 6f, 9th of 18, 10l behind Thelestes at Warwick 1m mdn, Gd. Inspector: Always mid-division, 6th of 12, 9l behind Meadow Leader at Lingfield 7f sell, AW. Primestick: Prominent over 4f, 5th of 9, 10l behind Aoife at Lingfield 6f mdn, AW. Rainstorm: Soon with winner, every chance 2f out, unable to quicken, 2nd of 8, 3l behind Tumbleweed Hero at Lingfield 1m mdn, AW. Sahara Rain: Led until headed and weakened over 2f out, 10th of 15, 21l behind Charles Bride at Carlisle 7f clm, Gd-St. Santana: Behind final 4f, last of 13, 40l behind Byzantium at Lingfield 1m2f hcap, AW. Social Record: Keen early, prominent, headway over 1f out, ran on well inside final furlong, 3rd of 9, 7l behind Aoife at Lingfield 6f mdn, AW. Tales: Headway over 1f out, never nearer, 7th of 20, 23l behind Cry For Freedom at Brighton 1m2f sell hcap, St. Kinross: Prominent, 3rd halfway, faded 2f out, 7th of 10, 5l behind Catch The Dragon at Goodwin Park 7f mdn, Gd-St.

Sport in brief

Whitehead's record attempt falls flat

ADAM WHITEHEAD, the European champion from Coventry, collapsed after his 200 metres breaststroke world record attempt failed at the British Short Course Championships in Glasgow. The 18-year-old lay slumped in the changing area for several minutes but was given the all-clear by the event doctor.

His coach coach Nick Sellwood blamed the effort and the emotion of missing out on the Russian Andrei Korneev's world record. "Adam is okay," he said. "He had a bit of rush of blood to the head when he came out of the pool and couldn't see."

Whitehead's hopes had been raised at last weekend's European Championships in Sheffield when he was just 0.8sec off the record. But he started too quickly in the first half of the race yesterday — when he was well inside record pace — and paid for his over-enthusiasm in the final 75 metres. Whitehead finished in 2min 10.03sec, well down on his best time in Sheffield and well off Korneev's mark of 2:07.79.

Cretier hopes go downhill

THE OLYMPIC downhill champion Jean-Luc Cretier returned home to La Plagne in France by ambulance yesterday after suffering a season-ending knee injury in Saturday's World Cup downhill at Val Gardena. Cretier initially said he would retire but has delayed his decision until after surgery and rehabilitation. The 32-year-old tore the cruciate ligament of his left knee and fractured his left hand in a high-speed spill. The race was won by Italy's Kristian Ghedina.

Swiss skiers found sudden success yesterday when Michael Von Gruenigen beat Italy's Patrick Holzer by 0.76sec to win the World Cup giant slalom at Alta Badia. It was Switzerland's first win on the men's circuit this season, and Karin Roten gave the Swiss women their first victory for two years by winning the World Cup slalom at Veysonnaz.

Testaverde fuels Jets' take-off

THE NEW YORK Jets have clinched their first AFC East Division title after their quarterback as Vinny Testaverde threw a pair of touchdowns and the defence held Doug Flutie in check for a 17–10 victory over the Buffalo Bills. Testaverde, who completed 14 of 23 passes for 184 yards, had a seven-yard scoring pass to Wayne Chrebet and a 71-yard strike to Dedric Ward in the third quarter that proved the winning score. The Washington Redskins' 20–16 home victory over the Tampa Bay Buccaneers clinched play-off spots for Dallas and Green Bay, and kept alive the New York Giants' play-off hopes.

Green light for America's Cup

ANDY GREEN, the British match racing skipper who has risen to 32nd in the world rankings, has assured himself of a place in the next America's Cup, *writes Bob Fisher*. While the Spirit of Britain group waits to announce a possible £5 million sponsor, Green has not only secured a personal sponsor for next year's circuit but has been selected by John Kolius to join the Aloha syndicate as an afterguard member of their tune-up boat. Green will be a specific adviser on the rules as they concern match racing and will link with Kolius in Hawaii next summer.

Home comfort for Appleby

STUART APPLEBY, runner-up to Greg Norman in the Australian Open at Royal Adelaide, equalled the tournament record of 271 to win his first professional title in Australia at the Coolum Classic in Queensland. Appleby, now based in the United States, had a final round of 69 to finish four shots clear of Craig Spence. Appleby equalled the tournament's four-round record shared by the former Open champion Ian Baker-Finch and Rodger Davis. The actor Kevin Costner teamed up with Jim Colbert to shoot a 10-under-par final round 62 to win the Lexus Challenge at La Quinta, California.

Equestrianism

Nieberg reins in £11,000 with clear round in the Vink

John Kerr at Olympia

LARS NIEBERG added to Germany's successes when winning the Vink Masters, a winner-take-all contest in which riders chose which fence should be raised before their round at the Olympia Show Jumping Championships yesterday.

On his relatively inexperienced 10-year-old Loro Piana Albertino he was the only one among three who reached the fourth and final round to remain unpenalised, collecting £11,000.

Last year's winner, his fellow German Ludger Beerbaum on Champion de Lys, and John Whitaker on Randi, were the only others in the final stage. Nieberg, narrowly beaten in last year's Grand Prix on For Pleasure, hopes to go one better today. It will be his last ride as the horse has been sold.

Earlier Robert Smith on Senator Tees Hanauer managed to out-pace a big field for the one-round Vink Mistletoe Stakes and was followed home by five foreigners.

On Saturday British riders, conspicuous by their absence from the presentation line-ups the previous day, retaliated with six through to a nine-horse barrage for the Traxdata World Cup qualifier, won to a foot-stamping ovation by John Whitaker on Virtual Village Granusch.

The veteran horse, only a few days short of his 20th birthday, had the fastest of five clears to head the Swiss Beat Mandli on Poor Boy, winner of the corresponding class in Berlin. Michael Whitaker was a creditable third for Britain on Virtual Village Ashley.

هكذا من الأصل

1998 – the defining moments



Royal condolences . . . Jana Novotna is comforted by the Duchess of Kent after losing the 1993 Wimbledon final PAUL HANNA

What a difference five years can make. No one who watched the women's final in July will forget the day it came right for Jana Novotna at the third time of asking, just as the duchess said it would



Summer dish of delight . . . Novotna raises the singles trophy at Wimbledon 98 MIKE HEWITT

In the first of a seasonal series on the past year **Stephen Bierley** recalls Wimbledon

Triumph at last for the choker turned joker

ONE of the most compelling images in tennis during the closing decade of this century was ne born of loss. In the 1993 imbledon women's singles nal, and leading 4–1 in the ird set, Jana Novotna dratically crumpled to defeat ainst Steffi Graf and then, nable to contain her emoons, wept lingeringly on the oulder of the Duchess of ent.

Four years later Novotna as on Wimbledon's Centre ourt again, losing in three ts to the 16-year-old Swiss artina Hingis. No tears this me, but playful resignation asking her disappointment she snatched the silver sewater dish away from ingis and made as if to run with it.

Despite the fact that she had been told by her royal comforter: "Don't worry. I am sure it will be third time lucky", it was generally felt that Novotna had visited her last duchess.

The 1993 image of a heart-broken loser choking on her despair seemed one that would forever epitomise Novotna's career, and she would be destined to be remembered as one of the finest women's players, particularly on grass, never to win a Grand Slam title.

This year had opened in Australia with Hingis, the world's No. 1, and like Novotna born in the old Czechoslovakia, winning the Australian Open title, thereby setting in motion what was expected to be a season dominated by the bright young things — Hingis, the two Williams sisters, Venus and Serena, and Russia's Anna Kournikova.

There is no record of the crinklies (ie. any player over 20) gathering around a boiling cauldron and tossing in the odd fillet of snake or newt's eye, but by the time the final at Roland Garros was reached the teenies had fallen under the spell of what may be politely referred to as the more mature players.

Novotna fans may have also taken heart from Petr Korda's victory in the men's final at Melbourne. Another renowned under-achiever, the 30-year-old Czech defeated Chile's Marcelo Rios for his first Grand Slam title.

Novotna had noted the comments of the younger players on the Tour, recognised their innate confidence, and determined to push herself to the limits in order to match their hunger for success.

Three years ago, her father's illness persuaded her that she was taking tennis too seriously. "I started to enjoy myself more. In the past people thought I was not a nice person because I didn't talk a lot. Lately the misconceptions have changed, which is incredibly important to me." And her father has recovered. Novotna now admits to being totally unprofessional when she was in her late teens, and recognises the current dilemma facing Hingis. "She's not as devoted to her tennis as she used to be. She wants to do different things, which is fine, but she has to find the time to dedicate herself to tennis too."

> By the time of the Roland Garros final, the teenies had fallen under the spell of the crinklies

The contrast in their Wimbledon preparation was significant. Novotna arrived two weeks in advance, winning both the singles and doubles titles at Eastbourne. Meanwhile Hingis had a holiday in the Alps, went to a World Cup game in France, shot a shampoo commercial, and then arrived in London just four days before Wimbledon began.

In the quarter-finals Novotna, the third seed, defeated Venus Williams 7–5, 7–6 and then beat Hingis, the holder, 6–4, 6–4 in the semis. "Jana showed more experience and, above all, maturity," said a former champion, Chris Evert.

Yet had America's Lindsay Davenport, the No. 2 seed then, and now the current world No. 1, won against France's Nathalie Tauziat, seeded 16, in the other semi-final, the supporters of Novotna would have surely entered the Centre Court with considerably more trepidation.

Even the bookies, men whose souls are stripped of sentiment, had the 29-year-old Novotna marked down as the overwhelming 1–6 favourite against Tauziat, while quoting a miserly 2–1 for a Czech straight-sets win. Virginia Wade, champion in 1977, but with a similar record of frailty under extreme pressure, pronounced that "Nathalie can't win".

This had nothing do to with the 30-year-old Frenchwoman's own temperament or ability, rather that a Novotna victory now seemed preordained.

Inevitably there were moments of anxiety for Novotna. She was broken in her opening service game, and although the break-back came quickly the tension was palpable every time the Czech served.

Having taken the first set 6–4, Novotna led 2–0 in the second set only to be hauled back to 5–5. The "Oh no, not again, Jana" pessimists squinted anxiously through their fingers.

"What's all the fuss about. I told you last year you would come back and win," said the Duchess afterwards, and the next day, men's final day, Novotna and her mother, Liba, could be seen wandering around the players's area linked by arm and beatific smiles, their feet scarcely touching the ground.

And yes, winning Wimbledon was "my dream come true" and everything from now on is "icing on the cake". The cliches were forgivable for every tennis fan could see her emotions and relate to them — just has they had done in 1993 in quite different circumstances.

The choker turned joker was now a Grand Slam winner, as befitted her talent. There was no more heart-warming resolution to a tennis final all year.

Cricket

Chanderpaul ton eads recovery

ONLY rain and bad light managed to contain Shivnarine Chanderaul yesterday in Pietermarzburg as the West Indian cored a superb unbeaten 132 n the second day of a four-ay match against South Afica A.

The weather closed in miday through the afternoon ession with the West Indins, who had begun the day n 77 for three, on 256 for six n their first innings.

Chanderpaul, 27 overnight, ompleted his century in 201 inutes off 164 balls with 15 ours and a six. When play vas called off he had faced 212 eliveries and taken his tally f fours to 20.

West Indies went in to lunch n a rocky 194 for five but then he 24-year-old Guyanese batsman and the reserve wicketeeper Junior Murray put ogether the most significant tand of the day. They added 10 for the sixth wicket, riding heir luck as Murray was ropped twice in making 45.

Earlier, Chanderpaul and Darren Ganga had taken their ourth-wicket stand begun on Saturday to 71 before Ganga, on 21, edged an away swinger from Lance Klusener to Sven Koenig at third slip.

Klusener — the pick of the bowlers with three for 47 — produced a similar delivery next ball to trap Floyd Reifer leg before. Murray survived the hat-trick ball but only just as it whistled past the outside edge of his bat.

● Brad Hodge scored his second successive century to lead Victoria's fightback on the second day of their Sheffield Shield match against New South Wales. He scored 120, his highest first-class score, as Victoria reached 219 for three in reply to New South Wales' first innings 360.

The NSW innings included 116 on Saturday from Steve Waugh, playing his only Sheffield Shield match of the season because of international commitments. Victoria's leg spinner Shane Warne continued his comeback from shoulder surgery by bowling 26 overs. He failed to take a wicket but said: "This is the best I've bowled since I returned."

Zimbabwe in the clear despite fog

BAD WEATHER was the only winner in the weekend's two Test matches, but brought with it celebration for Zimbabwe's touring team n Pakistan.

The Zimbabweans, needing o avoid defeat to secure their irst series victory on foreign oil, were again helped by a hick blanket of fog that has reverented play on all of the irst four days in Faisalabad. Zimbabwe won the opening Test in Peshawar.

In Dunedin, the first Test between New Zealand and India was abandoned yesterday with two days remaining and without a ball having been bowled, after three days of incessant rain.

The teams have agreed to stage a limited-over exhibition match today. They will play in traditional whites as neither team brought their coloured kits with them, and will use a red ball. Unfortunately, more rain is forecast.

Simon Doull has been included in New Zealand's squad for the second Test in in Wellington on Boxing Day.

Warne and Waugh to air allegations

SHANE WARNE and Mark Waugh will testify via a live video link to a Pakistan inquiry into match-fixing, the Australian Cricket Board said on Saturday.

Warne said revelations that the pair had taken money from a bookmaker for information on the weather and pitch conditions during Australia's 1994 tour of Sri Lanka and Pakistan made no difference to their allegations that Malik had tried to bribe them to play poorly.

"I'll be saying the same things that I said four years ago, nothing's changed," Warne said. "Their [Pakistan] players have testified against Salim Malik. We've testified against him. It's up to the judge."

Waugh and Warne, who had been reluctant to travel to Pakistan, were summonsed by the investigating judge to provide further testimony after news of the bookmaker scandal surfaced last week.

Basketball

Leopards finally spot on

Christian Bright

THE *hors d'oeuvre* became the main course in Birmingham yesterday when the Greater London Leopards, who had been cast in the unfamiliar supporting role, staged an impressive recovery, redolent of past glorious seasons, to win the first of the National Cup semi-finals.

The Leopards came from 18 points adrift to beat Newcastle Eagles 98–95 in overtime to secure their place in the final against Sheffield Sharks. In the second semi-final against Thames Valley Tigers, a damp squib by comparison, the Sharks succeeded 78–66.

Recently the Eagles had twice defeated the Leopards and a third loss looked a distinct possibility when they trailed 40–22. Chris Fite began and ended the first half with three-pointers for the Eagles who hit nine in all from long range before the interval but, significantly, only two afterwards.

It was then that Eric Burks shook off the disappointment of a wretched first half to find the inspiration to transform the match. Robert Youngblood and Brian Moore accepted his passes to force the Leopards level at 80–80, but it was Moore's fellow Englishman Stedroy Baker who took the game into the extra five minutes. Fouled by Fite, he kept his nerve to succeed with both free throws.

Only when Moore and Burks connected with successive three-pointers in overtime, however, did the Leopards first take the lead. Afterwards there was no stopping them. Tim Moore finished as their top scorer with 24 points but Burks was the decisive figure with his 17, all but two of which came after the interval.

Unlike the Eagles, the Sharks did not waste a big advantage. Will Johnson contributed 30 points and 13 rebounds to their victory against the holders, whose best efforts came from John McCord and Bryan Balser with 18 points apiece.

Ice Hockey

Cardiff close ranks during lull for Storm

Vic Batcheldor

CARDIFF took full advantage of a weekend of inactivity for the leaders Manchester Storm as their 5–2 home win over the Ayr Scottish Eagles cut the gap at the top to only three points.

The Devils, who have a game in hand on Manchester, went a goal down when Shawn Byram opened the scoring in the 15th minute. But they clinched victory with a powerful second session that saw them out-score the Eagles 4–1 through Peter Ekroth, Mario Simioni, Ivan Matulik and Steve Moria. John Parco replied for Ayr.

The Devils, who had their Canadian defenceman Derry Menard making his debut after his recent arrival from the Finnish club Kalpa Kupio, wrapped it up in the final minute when Ayr replaced their goalie, Sean Basilio, with an extra skater as they sought to pull back the deficit only for Martin Lindman to shoot into the empty net.

Sheffield Steelers won 5–1 at Newcastle Riverkings 48 hours after beating Nottingham 7–4 at home. Jamie Black put the Riverkings ahead after 56 seconds but from that point it was one-way traffic as two goals from Scott Allison plus further strikes by Teeder Wynne, Ken Priestlay and Ed Courtenay proved more than enough.

Hockey

India end long wait

Pat Rowley

INDIA, so long without a title, have won the Asian Games men's event for the first time in 32 years. They defeated South Korea 4–2 on penalties after the scores were level at 1–1 following extra-time in the final at Bangkok on Saturday.

Their success gives them automatic qualification for the Sydney Olympics as does that of South Korea in the women's tournament after defeating India 2–1 in their final. Automatic qualification for women's continental champions has been introduced for the first time now that there will be 10, rather than eight, competing teams in Sydney.

India's men have a fine record in penalty shoot-outs although they lost their previous one, against England, at the Commonwealth Games when David Luckes made crucial saves. It was India's goalkeeper who was their hero this time, Ashish Ballal saving twice.

In the match itself, South Korea took an early lead through Yeo Woon-kon but the Indian captain, Dhanraj Pillay, a former player in the National League with Indian Gymkhana, equalised before half-time.

Domestically, Southgate, one of the few Premier clubs to attempt to qualify for the national rounds of the English Indoor Championship, did so comfortably by winning all their matches at Epsom College. In their final game they defeated Bromley 11–3. The German Eiko Rott and their goalkeeper Giles Cadman were outstanding. Up front Neil Hawgood, Southgate's Australian coach, made a surprise but highly effective appearance.

The Canterbury forward David Matthews, who surprisingly was not included in the 1999 England squad last week, proved a match-winner for West London Institute who defeated Eastcote 9–8 to take the other Southern qualifying place.

Ian Jennings made a successful debut for Old Loughtonians, helping them to win the East qualifier at Aldenham School.

The second Eastern qualifying place was snatched by Dunton Engineering, a team that included several Southgate players. They finished ahead of the former champions St Albans.

The other clubs to go through were Norton and Hull from the North; and Firebrands and Yeovil & Sherborne from the West & Services qualifier.

The Midlands tournament was abandoned, after a goalkeeper had a seizure on the pitch at Worcester and later died on arrival at hospital.

Barford Tigers, Leek and Loughborough Students won their groups but the Midlands will now have to decide how to select their qualifiers.

Athletics

Radcliffe stuck in the mud

Duncan Mackay

PAULA RADCLIFFE's reputation was brought crashing to earth in Brussels yesterday in her first race since being crowned the European cross-country champion.

The Bedford runner finished a disappointing fourth in the opening race of this winter's World Cross Challenge series held in the King of Belgium's garden. Radcliffe was left floundering as Gete Wami, Ethiopia's former world cross-country champion, made a break halfway through the 6000 metres race, which took place in heavy conditions.

The Briton, suffering from a cold, was powerless to respond. She finished well adrift of Wami, Finland's Annemarie Sandell, whom she had beaten in Ferrara last weekend, and Ethiopia's Aeylech Worku.

"It was a disappointing run after winning the European title, particularly being beaten by Sandell, who I would have normally expected to beat," said Radcliffe.

Afterwards, she travelled to her altitude training camp in the French Pyrenees. There she was hoping to fine-tune her preparations for the Durham cross-country on January 2 but now plans to rest. "I found this race tough because of the mud and I need a few days of rest to shake off this cold and genuinely recover," said Radcliffe.

Even more disappointed was Fernanda Ribeiro, the Olympic 10,000m champion. The Portuguese runner, who is preparing for her marathon debut in London next April, finished 14th.

There was some success for British athletes when Hounslow's Sam Haughian won the junior men's race.

In the Cross Challenge 8000m race at Cumbernauld on Saturday, Yorkshire's Andrew Pearson out-sprinted Shaftesbury's Dominic Bannister for victory. It confirmed Pearson's return to form after injury and illness. Glasgow's Vikki McPherson won the women's race.

Snooker

Williams keeps up century touch to peg back McManus

Clive Everton

MARK WILLIAMS, the 23-year-old Welsh left-hander who defends his Benson & Hedges Masters title in February, was strongly placed to land his fourth world-ranked event when he led Alan McManus 6–2 in their best-of-17 frames final of the Irish Open in Dublin.

Beaten 6–4 by John Parrott in the German Masters final last Sunday, Williams beat the Liverpudlian 6–1 in Saturday's semi-final and completed his progress to 6–0 yesterday with 64, 64 and 101 breaks. This maintained his strike rate of a century in each of his five matches at the Irish national basketball stadium, including runs of 139 and 133.

McManus, appearing in his first world-ranking final since winning the Thailand Open in March 1996, made breaks of 91, 120 and 94 in his 6–3 semi-final win over Malta's Tony Drago but was not in contention against Williams until the fourth frame in which his attempt at the decisive black from distance was so wide that he went in-off to go 4–0 down.

At 6–0, Williams had dropped only five frames all week and thoughts started to drift to the possibility of the first whitewash in a world-ranking final since Steve Davis drubbed Dean Reynolds 10–0 to win the Rothmans Grand Prix nine years ago.

McManus's hopes deteriorated further when Williams obtained the two snookers he needed in the seventh, only to wobble the long black that would have made it 7–0. Having got off the mark with one black-ball win, though, Scotland's world No. 8 cleared with 32 for another to reduce his interval arrears to four frames.

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The Guardian INTERACTIVE

Rugby Union

Premiership: Bath 11 Saracens 19

Robinson haunted by the ghosts of Bath's past

Ian Malin discovers a tradition that has lost its meaning as winter begins to bite

SLADE'S Merry Christmas Christmas Everybody over the Tannoy was drowned out by even more disturbing sounds at the end of Bath's fifth successive defeat. Boos greeted Bath's players seeking the sanctuary of the dressing-room as Saracens waved to the Fez Boys huddled in the opposite corner of The Rec.

The delights of Bordeaux last January must have seemed as distant as a tropical beach. From strutting cup-winning European roosters to oven-ready turkeys in less than 12 months.

Bath have never lost five league games in a row before and Andy Robinson, their coach, knows that in the harsher world of professionalism, the finger pointing his way is not beckoning a Lottery winner.

"Yes, people have told me I should resign. They have told me to my face. And the only answer I can give them is through the quality of our performance on the pitch. But I'm not going to give this up. There is plenty to play for.

"On October 29 we were on top of the table and people were saying that this was the old Bath. But it is not. It is the new Bath, a team we are trying to develop. I'm part of that old Bath. It was great and a lot of the old values are still here.

"We dominated in the old amateur days. But it was before there was a domestic market in international players. Now Saracens turn up with players like Penaud, Pienaar, Coker and Wallace.

"Our history was not about style. It was about winning. But doing that is a lot harder in professional rugby."

Robinson's opposite number Mark Evans agreed. "Bath used to have an aura, but it no longer exists, and I wonder if it will ever exist again in English rugby. Liverpool had a similar aura in soccer. For years we came here and got nothing. It was a great English tradition but not now."

Saracens have beaten Bath four times in succession. And more worryingly for Bath, they did so on Saturday without playing particularly well. The Saracens defence was outstanding, as had Northampton's been when they won here a week earlier. But in an undistinguished match there were only brief passages of an uplifting play.

One conjured up Saracens' try midway through the first half. The visitors strung together around 30 passes with the excellent Brendon Daniel making a vital break. From the ensuing scrum, Kyran Bracken darted through a huge gap and found Steve Ravenscroft on his shoulder to score.

There were brief flourishes from Bath, and one ended with an interception try from the promising Iain Balshaw, but Gavin Johnson's four successive kicks at goal always put Saracens out of range. In truth, Bath never really looked likely to win although they may have had a case for a penalty try just before the break when Daniel appeared to tackle Adebayo without the ball.

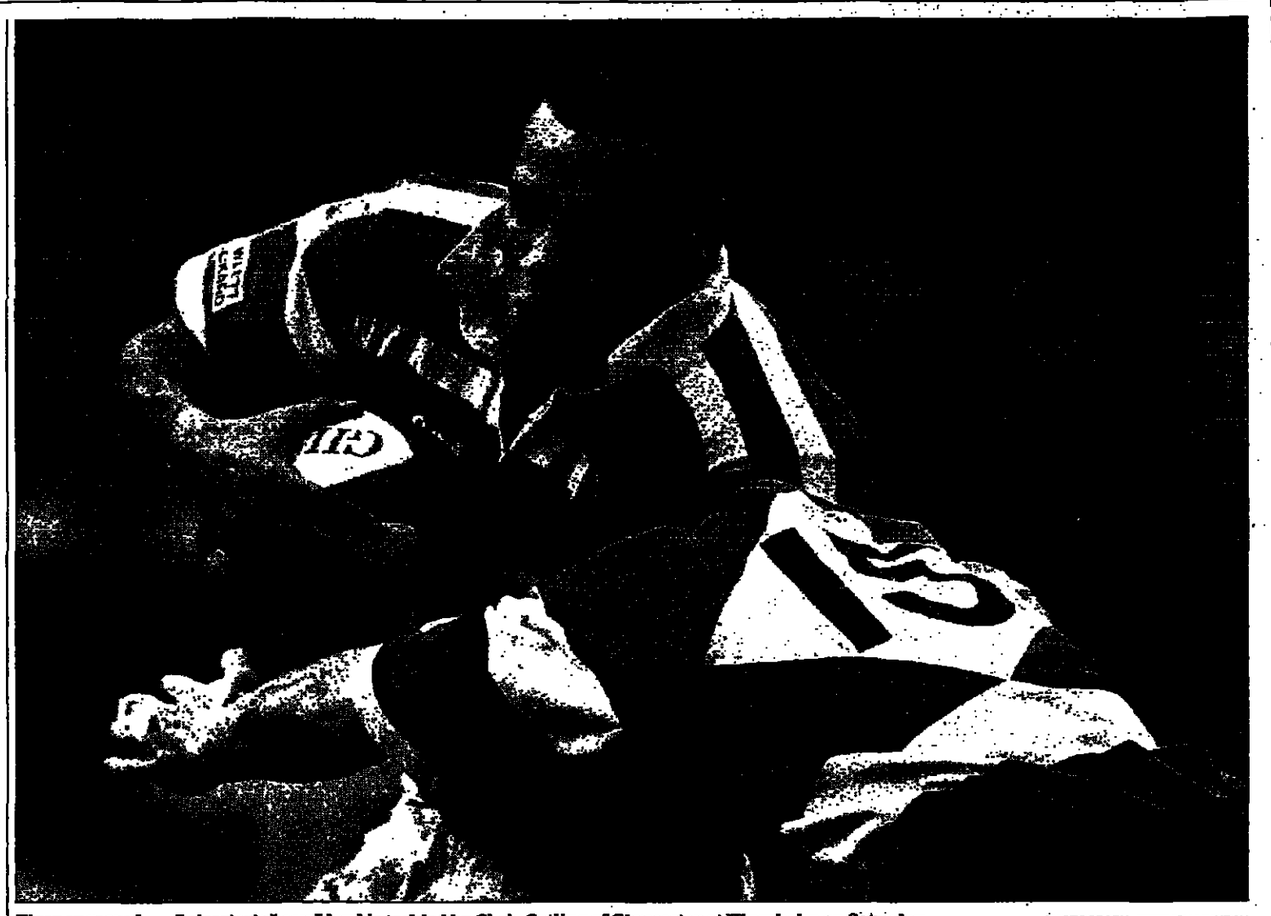
Despite these teams having, in Dan Lyle and the Man of the Match Tony Diprose, No. 8s who handle like slip fielders, neither side was able to build up an attacking momentum.

And Bath's problems mount. They lost their scrum-half and captain Andy Nicol as early as the eighth minute and he was replaced by the less effective Steve Hatley. Nicol has damaged knee ligaments and so looks unlikely to play again this season.

Another half-back, Jon Preston, has a ruptured Achilles tendon after only one league appearance, and Phil de Glanville's shoulder operation will put him out of action for club and country until after the start of the Five Nations.

As Robinson says: "There is no hiding place. That's the beauty of sport." But it is deeply ironic that he is just the sort of player Bath need in what is turning into a winter of discontent at The Rec.

SCORERS: Bath: Try: Balshaw. Penalties: Catt 2. Saracens: Try: Ravenscroft Conversions: Johnson. Penalties: Johnson 3. Drop goals: Penaud. Bath: Perry; Balshaw, Maggs, Guscott, Adebayo; Catt, Nicol (capt; Hatley, 8min); Hilton (Mallett, 72), Long, Ubogu, Bortwick (Sturnham, 49), Redman, Earnshaw (Thomas, 49), Peters, Lyle. **Saracens:** Johnson; Daniel, Constable, Ravenscroft, R Wallace; Penaud, Bracken; Pienaar (Reidy, 71), Chuter, P Wallace, Johns, Grewcock, Coker (Ogilvie, 66), Pienaar (capt), Diprose. **Referee:** A Rowden (Berkshire).



Tiger ensnared . . . Leicester's Leon Lloyd is tackled by Chris Catling of Gloucester at Kingsholm on Saturday PHOTOGRAPH: STEPHEN MUNDAY



In charge . . . Saracen Kyran Bracken DAVID ROGERS

Gloucester 18 Leicester 23

Tigers' pack leads the charge

Robert Armstrong sees Leicester stay in pole position in the race for the title

CONFIDENT, aggressive Leicester enjoyed the rare experience of blitzing the Gloucester pack so comprehensively that for long periods the Kingsholm faithful were reduced to silence.

Even the sound of pint glasses clinking in the club bar was perfectly audible in the cold air as Tim Stimpson consolidated Leicester's place at the top of the Premiership with a couple of penalties from distance in the closing minutes of this grinding struggle.

It may not have been the most exciting finale to a spirited slugfest that was high on endeavour, low on enterprise, but the Tigers had no qualms about profiting from the string of errors their superior forward play had induced in the hosts. When Dean Richards, the Leicester manager, prowled the touchline, one Gloucester wag who feared the master of the drive-maul might come on, shouted: "You're making me nervous, Richards."

Victory at fortress Kingsholm will be seen by Leicester as a hugely significant milestone on the road to what they hope will be their first league title in the professional era. It spoke volumes for their iron-willed commitment that the Tigers frequently frittered away good possession yet never looked in genuine danger of losing, even when Gloucester led 15–11 and then 18–17.

No player performed with greater authority than the Leicester No. 8 Martin Corry, which is saying something considering that his opposite number Steve Ojomoh was Gloucester's most effective ball-winner by a country mile. Just as the Newcastle pack swept all before them on their way to the title last season, the rampaging Tigers have the power and the prescience upfront to anticipate problems and devise working solutions within seconds.

The leaders could even afford the luxury of losing their captain Martin Johnson to the sin-bin early on for trading blows with Chris Fortey, the Gloucester hooker who was fortunate to stay on. The host side were unable to take advantage mainly because the Leicester flankers Neil Back and Paul Gustard proved adept at denying Gloucester quick ball, something they managed all afternoon.

Only in the third quarter did Gloucester show some passion when an opportunist try by the replacement Mark Mapletoft hinted at a creative potential that sadly never materialised. Instead, the Tigers turned the screw, stepping up the pressure in the set-pieces and making sure that the game was played mostly on the edge of the Gloucester 22. Had the injured Joel Stransky been on hand to direct matters, Leicester would surely have added to their early try by Dave Lougheed in the left corner.

> Gloucester lack players of the highest calibre in key positions

"Gloucester rattled our cage and shook us up a bit when they scored after the break but I couldn't see us losing because we were winning a huge amount of possession," said Richards.

"We did miss Stransky in those situations where experience would have counted but I thought Geordan Murphy did a reasonable job at fly-half — he just needs to develop a bit more confidence. We'd have liked to get the perfect game out of everyone but it doesn't always happen on the day, does it?"

It is hard to escape the conclusion that Gloucester are failing to challenge the leaders — they have also lost at home to Wasps and away to Northampton — primarily because they lack players of the highest calibre in key positions such as open-side flanker and scrum-half. Whether Richard Hill, their director of rugby, can engineer an upturn in their fortunes, especially away from home, must be open to doubt unless the club owner, Tom Walkinshaw, is ready to back his ambition with more cash.

According to Hill, his team's performance was their best for several weeks — "their commitment is something to build on" — yet any side that twice takes the lead in front of a partisan 10,000 crowd and still loses rather tamely has problems. One cannot agree with Hill that Gloucester merely have an inconsistent attitude in their away games: the plain fact is that they lack the squad strength in depth which would make them properly equipped for Premiership One.

How else to explain why Gloucester ultimately gained so little benefit from scoring two of the game's three tries? After their wing Brian Johnson replied in kind to Lougheed's touchdown, Leicester coldly raised the stakes and Stimpson, looking every inch the Lion he was last year, did the rest with six penalties from every part of the field. Poor Gloucester could only stand and stare.

SCORERS: Gloucester: Tries: Johnson, Mapletoft. **Conversions:** Mapletoft. **Penalties:** Mapletoft 2. **Leicester: Try:** Lougheed. **Penalties:** Stimpson 6. **Gloucester:** Catling; B Johnson (Mapletoft, 35min), Fanolua, Tombs (capt), Saint-André; Mannix, Sanders (Benton, 80); Windo, Fortey (McCarthy, h-t), Deacon (Powles, 61), Fidler, Cornwell (Sims, 61), Jones, Carter, Ojomoh. **Leicester:** Stimpson; Lougheed, Potter, Howard, Lloyd; Murphy, Healey, Rowntree (Jelley, 70), Cockerill, Garforth, M Johnson (capt), Van Heerden, Gustard, Back, Corry. **Referee:** N Williams (WRU).

London Irish 20 Harlequins 16

Bachop's wonder try stops Irish thinking of home

Robert Kitson sees a moment to rival Gareth Edwards' famous Barbarians score

WHEREVER London Irish end up playing *their home games* next year, a shaggy dog story with plenty more mileage in it, their supporters will have to travel a long way to find a better try than the one that dazzled Harlequins into rare submission on Saturday.

Maybe Dick Best, the Exiles' director of rugby, struck a pre-Christmas chord in the week with his lament about skills failing to keep pace with muscle development in the professional era. In any event, after a disappointing display at Saracens Best's men answered the call with such a flourish that *Stephen Bachop's 32nd-minute* score already protrudes from this season's sack of Allied Dunbar delights.

Imagine Gareth Edwards' Barbarian effort in 1973 re-enacted for Fantasy Football in Irish's muddy back garden in Sunbury and you get the general picture. On this occasion it was the wing Jarrod Cunningham who filled the Phil Bennett role, running back towards his own line to gather a bouncing ball before launching a wonderful left-field stampede.

The New Zealander slipped O'Shea away on a great angle out of the 22 before Rob Gallacher, Jake Boer and Kieron Dawson all delivered perfectly timed passes at pace. It remained for Bachop to confound those unsure he had the legs to sprint 50 metres to the left corner, and his side to ensure it was not for nought.

"At least we won the game, otherwise we'd have been harping on about the try for the rest of the season. It makes Christmas almost tolerable," said Best, the sort of taskmaster for whom the festive season is merely another string of dates on the conditioning calendar. Amazingly he will be giving his side the day off prior to their Boxing Day fixture against Richmond. "I'm weakening," he admitted.

"I was very proud of the boys. They played with a bit of passion and proved we could be a good side if we won even 50 per cent of the line-outs. Every time they kicked the ball off the field I thought 'Christ, that's a clever ploy by them' because they knew they'd get it back again."

Quins will use the video to study the day's two other tries rather than Bachop's. Whether Keith Wood made a double movement as he stretched to score was debatable; the penalty try on the hour awarded against a non-retreating defence when Malcolm O'Kelly took a quick tap three metres out looked less so.

At least Quins' first defeat in seven league games was nothing on the scale of the 62–14 defeat on the same ground last season, but where will Irish host them next time? Their chief executive Geoff Huckstep will put a list of ground-sharing proposals before the board in mid-January, always assuming punters can be persuaded the stout elsewhere is worth the journey.

Chelsea have been sounded out but reportedly want £85,000 per home game; the Oxford United rumours appear to have been a desperate wheeze to pacify the soccer club's bankers. Staying put would involve persuading the local council and residents that an enlarged sports complex would enrich the community more than packing the site with houses. "The most important thing for us is that we're in the big competition next year whether we play here or somewhere else," said Best.

The club may yet face Saracens *in a league game in Dublin* on May 1, subject to a generous sponsor being found. How often do we hear that phrase these days?

SCORERS: London Irish: Tries: Bachop, penalty try. **Conversions:** Cunningham 2. **Penalties:** Cunningham 2. **Harlequins: Try:** Wood. **Conversions:** Schuster. **Penalties:** Schuster 3. **London Irish:** O'Shea (capt); Bishop, Burrows (Todd, 60min), Venter, Cunningham (Woods, 80); Bachop, Putt; Hatley, Howe (Kirke, 60), Fullman (Hardwick, 72), Strudwick, O'Kelly, Boer. Dawson, Gallacher (Spicer, 68). **Harlequins:** Williams; O'Leary (Keyter, 75), Officer, Schuster, Lugar; Lacroix (capt), Harries (Wright, 37); Leonard, Wood, Halpin (Barnes, 68), Llewellyn, Morgan, Leach, Jenkins, Sheasby. **Referee:** E Morrison (Bristol).

Welsh round-up

Lack of goodwill for unity appeal

Paul Rees

CHRISTMAS may be approaching but there is little sign of goodwill in Welsh rugby. With less than a year to go to the World Cup, which Wales will host, the Welsh Rugby Union faces losing Cardiff and Swansea permanently with Pontypridd and Llanelli, disenchanted with low crowds and their low profile, likely to follow suit.

The WRU was due to announce on Saturday the four clubs it intends bankrolling in next year's proposed British League but delayed for two reasons: Cardiff and Swansea have made no submissions and a British League has yet to be agreed.

The WRU chairman Glanmor Griffiths has appealed for unity but it is likely to fall on deaf ears. He is the chairman of the Home Unions working party set up to create a structure for a British League. It meets on Wednesday, but if the league does get off the ground it now looks certain to be purely Anglo-Welsh.

"It is vital that we get a cross-border tournament going next season," said Griffiths. "The door is open to Cardiff and Swansea. I am maintaining a dialogue with them and I will do all I can to resolve the differences we have."

Cardiff provided the shock of the Swalec Cup fourth round on Saturday, even though they did not play: their tie against Llandovery at the Arms Park was postponed because of work on the Millennium Stadium.

The two clubs had been unable to agree an alternative date. Under WRU rules that meant Llandovery would have a bye into the next round, even though technically it was the WRU which caused the match to be called off. Cardiff have now apparently agreed to travel to Llandovery on January 12.

Llanharan went close to toppling Premier Division Newport, who trailed 20–19 with three minutes to go and were without their lock Gareth Taylor, sent off for two yellow cards. However Newport withstood a late siege before their New Zealand full-back Matt Cardey crossed for a try to seal a 25–19 victory.

"We should have won," said Llanharan's coach Keith James, a Newport player in 1980 when the club lost to Penclawdd in what was then the biggest giant-killing act in the cup's history.

Mixed fortunes for the rebels

THE Welsh rebel clubs had mixed fortunes yesterday as Swansea won 28–14 at Bedford while Cardiff lost 28–24 away to Wasps.

Swansea's 11th win in 15 starts in the Anglo-Welsh series followed a three-try surge at the start of the second half through Scott Gibbs, Dean Thomas and Colin Charvis.

Arwel Thomas converted all three to add to his first-half kick after Lee Jones's try. Sam *Howard landed three penalties* and Charlie Harrison scored a late try for Bedford.

Lee Jarvis collected 19 points to win the fly-half battle with Alex King, but Wasps still inflicted Cardiff's fourth consecutive defeat.

Wasps scored tries through Dinos Alexopoulos, Andrew Le Chevalier, Josh Lewsey and Simon Mitchell, with Jarvis and John Humphreys replying for Cardiff.

West Hartlepool 9 Northampton 33

Saints show no mercy

David Irvine

TALK of survival for West Hartlepool at the season's end seemed more than a little premature as normality returned at Victoria Park yesterday.

Having beaten Bedford, closest to them at the foot of the table last weekend, West found Northampton, from the opposite end, too much of a handful, and lost emphatically by five tries to nil.

Northampton are now level with the leaders Leicester, who hold a considerable points-difference advantage, and their next meeting at Franklins Gardens on March 13 — the Tigers won at Welford Road — could have a crucial bearing on the championship.

Once again West could not be faulted for their enthusiasm and effort. In team-work, however, they never matched Northampton, although Stephen Vile tried to orchestrate things with a splendid performance at stand-off until, like five team-mates, he departed injured.

On a bitterly cold day, errors were inevitable. Numb fingers saw repeated attacks, especially by Northampton, flounder, and it was the Saints pack who carried the day. None contributed more than the hooker Federico Mendez, their inspiring captain Tim Rodber, Budge Pountney and Pat Lam. The latter scored two second-half tries.

Though Vile controlled the first half well, and kicked three penalties as a result of West's territorial supremacy, the only time West threatened a try was when Vile shimmied through only to be cut down five metres short by the Northampton defence.

Vile's kicking in the first period was convincingly countered by Northampton. First Pountney went over from a line-out and a quick tapped penalty by Dawson and a run in which he eluded three defenders underlined Northampton's quicker thinking and greater penetration.

In the second half it was virtually one-way traffic. A perfect inside pass from Lam gave Dawson a second try and it was the Samoan No. 8 who claimed the last two, his second after a brilliantly timed flick pass from Matt Allen. Grayson chipped in with four conversions as Northampton took to nine their victories in their last 10 outings.

SCORERS: West Hartlepool: Penalties: Vile 3 **Northampton: Tries:** Pountney, Dawson 2, Lam 2. **Conversions:** Grayson 4. **West Hartlepool:** Farrell; Tanginoa, Mullins (McLuro, 68min), Greaves (Benson, 19), John, Vile (Handley, 66), Stone, Sparks, McDonald, P Beal, Farmer (capt), Gilchen (Cassidy, 2; Whitehead 34), Ponton, Monkley, Brewer. **Northampton:** N Beal; Mair, Blyth, Allen, Sleightholme, Grayson, Dawson; Pagel, Mendez, Stewart, Metcalfe, Rodber (capt), Scely (Phillips, 69), Pountney, Lam. **Referee:** B Campsall (Yorkshire)

Newcastle 30 Sale 15

Falcons given a Legg up

Michael Prestage

NEWCASTLE have not lost a home game on this ground, Kingston Park, since January 1996 and Sale lacked the firepower to seriously challenge that impressive record.

Sale never won enough possession to seriously trouble Newcastle and five tries to two in the home side's favour was an accurate reflection of the play.

The line-out was a disaster for the visitors throughout. It appears that *the throwing-in* frailities of the hooker Phil Greening have not been cured on the journey north from Gloucester.

The fourth-minute opening try was Newcastle at their simple and efficient best. Doddie Weir caught the line-out and the forwards drove before the scrum-half Gary Armstrong went on an angled run to the line. Newcastle are, as Sale's coach John Mitchell noted, well organised and play as an effective unit.

His own side seemed to have acquired the happy knack of unearthing talented wings. England's David Rees and Tom Beim are already at the club and the 19-year-old Steve Hanley is a prospective future international. He is 6ft 3in, 16st and fast. Certainly the Newcastle players were left trailing in his wake as he made a 35-metre sprint for the line.

Newcastle's riposte was swift with three tries that showed up Sale's defensive *frailities. In the first, Matt* Moore lost possession and Newcastle's No. 8 Ross Beattie seized the opportunity to work the ball wide for Stuart Legg to score.

The full-back crossed for the second in the opposite corner in the 23rd minute after a break by the centre Martin Shaw, and Shaw himself got the third try when Sale again turned over possession.

Jonny Wilkinson's penalty in the 47th minute gave the home side a healthy 17-point lead. But when Shane Howarth dummied and sidestepped to wrongfoot the Newcastle defence, Sale were within 10 points. However, three white cards played a part in the messy finish.

First Ross Nesdale punched in retaliation to Peter Anglesea's stamping — that accounted for those two — and then Kevin Ellis received the third for checking Gary Armstrong with his elbow. The last word went to Garath Archer with *an injury-time* try.

SCORERS: Newcastle: Tries: Armstrong, Legg 2, Shaw, Archer. **Conversions:** Wilkinson. **Penalty:** Wilkinson. **Sale: Tries:** Hanley, Howarth. **Conversion:** Howarth. **Penalty:** Howarth. **Newcastle:** Legg; Naylor, Shaw, Wilkinson, Tuigamala; Andrew (capt), Armstrong; Graham, Nesdale, Hurter, Weir, Archer, Walton, Cartmell (Horton, 67min), Beattie. **Sale:** Mallinder (capt); Moore, Mather, Yates, Hanley; Howarth, Smith (Ellis, 64); Winstanley, Greening, Bell, Raiwalui, Baldwin, Anglesea, P Sanderson (A Sanderson, 73), Machacek. **Referee:** R Dickson (Scottish RU).

هكذا من الاصل

FA Carling Premiership

	P	W	D	L	F	A	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
		Home					Away						
Chelsea	18	6	3	0	15	5	2	6	1	14	12	12	33
Aston Villa	17	6	2	1	17	11	3	4	1	10	6	10	33
Man Utd	18	6	3	1	24	12	2	4	2	12	11	13	31
Middlesbrough	18	4	5	0	15	7	3	4	2	15	14	9	30
Leeds	18	6	2	1	16	3	1	6	2	13	14	12	29
Arsenal	18	5	4	0	14	4	2	4	3	6	7	9	29
West Ham	18	5	3	1	14	10	3	2	4	8	12	0	29
Wimbledon	18	5	3	1	14	9	2	2	5	9	20	-6	26
Liverpool	18	4	3	2	17	10	3	1	5	12	12	7	25
Newcastle	18	5	2	2	14	10	1	4	4	8	11	1	24
Leicester	18	5	2	2	14	9	1	4	4	7	11	1	24
Derby	18	2	5	2	8	8	3	4	2	10	9	1	24
Tottenham	18	4	3	2	15	15	2	2	5	8	13	-5	23
Sheff Wed	18	5	2	2	13	5	1	2	6	7	14	1	22
Everton	18	2	5	2	3	5	3	2	4	9	12	-5	22
Charlton	17	2	3	2	13	8	1	4	5	9	19	-5	16
Coventry	18	3	3	3	10	11	1	1	7	5	15	-11	16
Blackburn	18	3	2	4	10	10	0	3	6	7	16	-9	14
Southampton	18	2	2	5	12	18	1	2	6	3	17	-20	13
Nottm Forest	18	1	5	3	8	11	1	1	7	9	21	-15	12

Premiership results

Arsenal (1) 3 Leeds (0) 1
Bergkamp 26, Vieira 62, Petit 82 — Hasselbaink 66
Arsenal (4-4-2): Manninger; Dixon, Keown, Bould, Vivas; Ljungberg (Grimandi 72min), Vieira, Petit, Overmars (Wreh 87); Bergkamp, Anelka. Subs not used: Lukic, Boa Morte, Mendez.
Leeds (5-3-2): Martyn; Halle, Woodgate, Hasland, Molenaar (Wetherall 45), Harte; Bowyer, Hopkin, Granville (Smith 80); Hasselbaink, Kewell. Subs not used: Robinson, Sharpe, Wijnhard.
Att: 38,025. Ref: P Durkin (Portland).

Chelsea (0) 2 Tottenham (0) 0
Poyet 80, Flo 90
Chelsea (4-4-2): De Goey; Ferrer, Duberry, Leboeuf, Lambourde (Goldbaek 90min); Petrescu, Poyet, Morris, Babayaro; Zola (Flo 70), Vialli. Subs not used: Hitchcock, Nicholls, Terry.
Tottenham (4-4-2): Walker; Carr, Young, Campbell, Sinton (Edinburgh 75); Fox (Allen 85), Anderton, Nielsen, Ginola (Clemence 85); Ferdinand, Armstrong. Subs not used: Baardsen, Calderwood.
Att: 34,881. Ref: G Poll (Tring).

Coventry (1) 1 Derby (0) 1
Whelan 17 — Carsley 50
Coventry (4-4-2): Hedman; Nilsson, Williams, Shaw, Edworthy (Breen 72min); Telfer (Boateng 84), McAllister (Aloisi 87) Soltvedt, Froggatt; Huckerby, Whelan. Subs not used: Ogrizovic, Shilton.
Derby (3-5-2): Poom; Prior, Carbonari, Laursen; Delap, Harper, (Elliott 45), Schnoor, Powell, Dorigo (Hunt 66); Sturridge (Carsley 45), Wanchope. Subs not used: Hoult, Christie.
Att: 16,627. Ref: U Rennie (Sheffield).

Liverpool (2) 2 Sheff Wed (0) 0
Berger 19, Owen 34
Liverpool (3-5-2): James; Carragher, Staunton, Babb; Heggem (Kvarme 82min), Redknapp, Ince, Berger, Bjornebye; Owen (Riedle 86) Fowler. Subs not used: Friedel, McAteer, Thompson.
Sheff Wed (4-4-2): Srnicek; Hinchcliffe, Walker, Thome, Atherton; Alexandersson (Briscoe 57), Sonner, Jonk, Rudi (Humphries 86); Booth, Carbone. Subs not used: Clarke, Stefanovic, Magilton.
Att: 40,003. Ref: A Wilkie (Durham).

Man Utd (0) 2 Middlesbro (2) 3
Butt 62, Scholes 70 — Ricard 23, Gordon 31, Deane 59
Man Utd (4-4-2): Schmeichel; P Neville (Solskjaer 75min), G Neville, Johnsen, Irwin; Beckham (Scholes 64), Keane, Butt, Giggs; Sheringham, Cole. Subs not used: Blomqvist, Van der Gouw, Brown.
Middlesbrough (3-5-2): Schwarzer; Cooper, Vickers, Pallister; Festa, Mustoe (Moore, 72), Maddison (Beck, 83), Townsend, Gordon; Deane, Ricard.
Att: 55,152. Ref: G Willard (Worthing).

Newcastle (0) 1 Leicester (0) 0
Glass 66
Newcastle (4-4-2): Given; Charvet, Dabizas, Howey, Barton; Georgiadis, Lee, Speed, Glass; Andersson, Ketsbaia (Shearer 55min). Subs not used: Harper, Hamann, Hughes, Solano.
Leicester (4-4-2): Keller; Sinclair (Kaamark 61), Taggart, Elliott, Ullathorne; Impey, Izzet (Savage 48), Lennon, Guppy; Cottee (Fenton 66), Heskey. Subs not used: Arphexad, Zagorakis.
Att: 36,718. Ref: J Winter (Stockton-on-Tees).

N Forest (2) 2 Blackburn (0) 2
Chettle 22 (pen), Freedman 30 — Blake 49, 90
Notts Forest (4-4-2): Beasant; Hjelde, Mattsson, Chettle, Rogers (Armstrong 88min); Stone, A Johnson, Gemmill, Bart-Williams; Freedman, Shipperley (Harewood 82). Subs not used: Crossley; Bonalair, Darcheville.
Blackburn (4-4-2): Filan; Kenna, Henchoz, Dailly, Davidson; Gillespie (D Johnson 78), Sherwood, McKinlay, Wilcox (Duff 89); Sutton, Blake. Subs not used: Davies, Peacock, Fettis.
Att: 22,013. Ref: S Lodge (Barnsley)

Southampton (1) 3 Wimbledon (0) 1
Ostenstad 11, 65, Kachloul 84 — Gayle 75
Southampton (4-4-2): Jones, Hiley, Monk, Lundekvam, Bridge; Kachloul, Palmer, Hughes, Le Tissier (Basham 78min); Ostenstad, Beattie. Subs not used: Warner, Williams, Paul, Stensgaard.
Wimbledon (4-4-2): Sullivan; Cunningham, Perry, Blackwell, Thatcher; Ardley, (Cort 78), Roberts (C Hughes, 45), Earle, M Hughes; Gayle, Ekoku (Kennedy, 83). Subs not used: Kimble, Baldie.
Att: 14,354. Ref: M Reed (Birmingham).

West Ham (1) 2 Everton (0) 1
Keller 19, Sinclair 75 — Cadamarteri 71
West Ham (3-5-2): Hislop, Pearce, Ferdinand, Dicks; Sinclair, Lomas, Berkovic, Lampard, Keller; Wright, Hartson. Subs not used: Forrest, Breacker, Potts, Omoyinmi, Lazaridis.
Everton (3-5-2): Myrhe; Bilic, Materazzi, Unsworth; Ward, (Collins 74min) Grant, (Barmby 65) Dacourt, Hutchison, Cleland; Madar (Branch 65), Cadamarteri. Subs not used: Simonsen, Farley.
Att: 25,998. Ref: R Harris (Risinghurst, Oxon).

Non-league

CONFERENCE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Kettering	23	13	5	5	31	16	44
Cheltenham	20	11	7	2	37	17	40
R & D'monds	18	10	5	3	36	16	35
Stevenage	20	9	7	4	26	20	34
Yeovil	20	8	8	4	28	22	32
Hednesford	19	8	8	3	27	21	32
Hereford	21	9	5	7	26	22	32
Kingstonian	19	8	7	4	29	25	31
Morecambe	21	9	3	9	35	42	30
Hayes	19	9	2	8	23	27	29
Woking	19	8	4	7	25	23	28
Northwich	21	7	6	8	23	24	27
Kidderminster	19	7	4	8	29	23	25
Southport	19	5	8	6	25	26	23
Dover	19	5	8	6	20	23	23
Leek Town	20	6	3	11	30	31	21
Barrow	22	5	6	11	21	38	21
Telford	20	4	8	8	22	34	20
Forest Green	20	4	7	9	23	29	19
Doncaster	20	4	5	11	22	31	17
Farnborough	20	4	5	11	21	40	17
Welling	21	2	9	10	19	33	15

Barrow (0) 2 Forest Green (0) 1
Coates 53, Macauley 62 — McGregor 70. Att: 1,176

Cheltenham (2) 3 Stevenage (0) 0
Eaton 21, 33, Watkins 55 (pen). Att: 2,772

Doncaster (1) 5 Dover (3) 4
Kirkwood 30, 84, Penney 52, Maamria 75, Budden 81 (og) — Vansittart 13, 27, 3, Hynes 79. Att: 2,119

Hednesford (2) 3 Welling (2) 2
Bradley 43, Bignall 44, Ware 70 — Adams 18, 20. Att: 806

Hereford (0) 0 Kettering (1) 2
Att: 2,181 — Hudson 45, Fisher 58

Leek (0) 2 Kingstonian (2) 2
Mike 52, McAuley 83. Att: 495 — Leworthy 12, Corbett 39

Morecambe (1) 2 Hayes (1) 3
Mayers 11, Norman 85. Att: 1,016 — Watts 40, 86, Hall 54

Rushden (1) 1 Farnborough (0) 0
West 26. Att: 2,481

Southport (1) 1 Kidderminstr (1) 1
Elam 15. Att: 978 — Hines 30

Woking (2) 2 Northwich (0) 1
Steele 13 (pen), Hay 29 — Walters 90. Att: 2,059

Yeovil (0) 4 Telford (0) 0
Keeling 49, Hannigan 57, 64, Patmore 86. Att: 2,253

UNIBOND LEAGUE: Premier Division: Accrington Stanley 1 Frickley 1; Bishop Auckland 0 Chorley 4; Colwyn Bay 1 Spennymoor 3; Emley 0 Leigh RMI 2; Gainsborough 0 Altrincham 3; Marine 0 Gateshead 1; Runcorn 1 Blyth Spartans 0; Stalybridge 3 Lancaster 1; Whitby Tn 2 Hyde Utd 3; Winsford Utd 0 Guiseley 1; Worksop 1 Bamber Bridge 1. **First Division:** Witton Alb 4 Belper Tn 2. **Saturday:** Alfreton Tn 0 Droylsden 2; Ashton Utd 1 Netherfield Kendal 1; Congleton Tn 2 Whitley Bay 2; Farsley Celtic 1 Matlock Tn 1; Flixton 3 Eastwood Tn 2; Gretna 3 Bradford PA 2; Harrogate Tn 1 Burscough 2; Lincoln Utd 2 Radcliffe Bor 4; Stocksbridge PS 2 Gt Harwood Tn 1. **Postponed:** Hucknall Tn v Trafford.

RYMAN LEAGUE: Premier Division: Aldershot Tn 1 Heybridge 1; Billericay Tn 1 Dulwich 0; Bishop's Stortford 1 Bromley 3; Chesham 0 Basingstoke 2; Gravesend 2 Dag & Red 0; Hendon 1 Carshalton 1; Purfleet 6 Walton & Hersham 1; Slough 0 Boreham Wood 3; St Albans 1 Harrow Borough 1; Sutton Utd 1 Enfield 1. **Postponed:** Hampton v Aylesbury. **First Division:** Barton Rvrs 2 Berkhamsted Tn 0; Bognor Regis Tn 4 Wembley 1; Braintree Tn 1 Grays Ath 1; Chertsey Tn 0 Molesey 2; Oxford C 2 Worthing 2; Wealdstone 1 Leatherhead 1; Yeading 1 Canvey Island 3. **Postponed:** Croydon v Uxbridge; Leyton Pennant v Maidenhead Utd; Romford v Staines Tn; Whyteleafe v Hitchin Tn. **Second Division:** Chalfont St Peter 5 Wivenhoe Tn 2; Harlow Tn 3 Bedford Tn 0; Hertford Tn 0 Edgware Tn 1; Horsham 1 Hemel Hempstead 5; Hungerford Tn 0 Met Police 2; Leighton Tn 1 Windsor & Eton 1; Northwood 0 Banstead Ath 2; Thame Utd 3 Bracknell Tn 0; Tooting & Mitcham 0 Marlow 2; Witham Tn 2 Abingdon Tn 2; Wokingham Tn 2 Barking 3. **Third Division:** Aveley 2 Cheshunt 1; Dorking 1 Croydon Ath 5; Ford Utd 5 Southall 1; Kingsbury Tn 1 Lewes 2; Tilbury 1 Camberley Tn 1; Tring Tn 2 Epsom & Ewell 1; Ware 2 Flackwell Hth 0; Wingate & Finchley 5 Clapton 0. **Postponed:** Egham Tn v East Thurrock Utd; Hornchurch v Corinthian Casuals.

DR MARTENS LEAGUE: Premier Division: Atherstone 0 Weymouth 0; Boston Utd 1 Gloucester C 0; Cambridge C 1 Nuneaton 1; Crawley Tn 4 Bromsgrove 1; Dorchester 2 Kings Lynn 1; Gresley Rvrs 0 Grantham 1; Halesowen 3 Salisbury 3; Ilkeston Tn 2 Merthyr 0; Rothwell Tn 3 Bath C 2; Tamworth 0 Burton Alb 1; Worcester C 0 Hastings 0. **Midland Division:** Bedworth Utd 0 Newport AFC 1; Bilston Tn 2 Sutton Coldfield Tn 1; Bloxwich Tn 2 Stamford AFC 5; Clevedon Tn 2 RC Warwick 0; Moor Green 1 Cinderford Tn 2; Paget Rngrs 1 Evesham Utd 2; Stourbridge 0 Shepshed Dynamo 2; VS Rugby 2 Stafford Rngrs 3; Weston-S-Mare 1 Hinckley Utd 1. **Postponed:** Solihull Bor v Blakenall. **Southern Division:** Andover 1 Raunds Tn 2; Corby Tn 1 Dartford 2; Fisher Ath London 2 Brackley Tn 0; Folkestone Invicta 4 Baldock Tn 0; Havant & Waterlooville 3 Cirencester Tn 0; Sittingbourne 0 Erith & Belvedere 1; St Leonards 1 Margate 6; Witney Tn 0 Newport (IoW) 1; Yate Tn 1 Fleet Tn 3. **Postponed:** Bashley v Ashford Tn; Tonbridge Angels v Chelmsford C.

NORTHERN COUNTIES EAST LEAGUE: Premier Division: Brigg Tn 1 Liversedge 0; Buxton 3 Hallam 2; Ossett Alb 3 Ossett Tn 1; Pickering Tn 2 Arnold Tn 4; Pontefract Cols 2 Denaby Utd 1; Selby Tn 3 Thackley 4; Sheffield 4 Glasshoughton Welf 1; Staveley MW 1 Armthorpe Welf 2. **Postponed:** Eccleshill Utd v Maltby MW; Garforth Tn v North Ferriby Utd.

SCREWFIX DIRECT LEAGUE: Premier Division: Barnstaple Tn 6 Westbury Utd 1; Bideford 0 Melksham Tn 3; Bridgwater Tn 3 Paulton Rvrs 1; Brislington 2 Mangotsfield Utd 1; Calne Tn 1 Bristol MF 0; Odd Down 2 Bridport 3; Taunton Tn 8 Keynsham Tn 0.

S-E COUNTIES LEAGUE: Gillingham 0 Leyton Orient 1; Reading 1 Cambridge Utd 1. **Postponed:** Oxford Utd v Colchester Utd.

FAI NATIONAL LEAGUE: Premier Division: Bray Wndrs 0 Bohemians 1; Cork C 1 UCD 2. **Saturday:** Sligo Rvrs 1 Shelbourne 3; Derry C 0 Dundalk 1.

UNIBOND LEAGUE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Worksop	21	11	4	6	29	24	37
Altrincham	21	10	6	5	34	19	36
Guiseley	18	11	2	5	31	20	35
Gateshead	22	10	5	7	34	29	35
Bamber Bridge	22	9	8	5	30	26	35
Winsford Utd	21	9	6	6	31	24	33
Blyth Spartans	23	10	3	10	29	31	33
Lancaster	18	9	5	5	28	22	32
Hyde Utd	20	8	7	5	28	18	31
Gainsborough	22	8	4	9	31	28	31
Emley	19	8	6	5	26	21	30
Whitby Town	20	7	8	5	36	30	29
Leigh RMI	20	7	7	6	32	28	28
B Auckland	24	6	7	11	32	43	25
Marine	23	5	9	9	30	38	24
Stalybridge	20	6	5	9	30	32	23
Frickley	18	5	8	5	22	24	23
Runcorn	18	5	8	5	18	21	23
Colwyn Bay	21	6	4	11	25	35	22
Spennymoor	23	6	4	13	31	44	22
Chorley	22	3	9	10	25	39	18
A Stanley	21	4	5	12	21	36	17

RYMAN LEAGUE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Aylesbury	19	12	5	2	34	13	41
Billericay Tn	20	11	5	4	26	18	38
Purfleet	21	11	4	6	42	26	37
Sutton Utd	18	11	4	3	35	21	37
St Albans	18	10	6	2	34	21	36
Hendon	20	9	6	5	41	31	33
Aldershot Tn	19	8	5	6	38	19	29
Dag & Red	19	8	5	6	40	29	29
Boreham Wood	19	7	7	5	29	26	28
Enfield	18	8	3	7	31	24	27
Gravesend	18	8	3	7	23	21	27
Harrow Borough	21	7	5	9	33	36	26
Bromley	20	7	4	9	34	34	25
Basingstoke	18	7	3	8	30	25	24
Dulwich	20	6	5	9	20	27	23
Slough	19	5	6	8	25	34	21
Chesham	19	6	3	10	29	39	21
W & Hersham	19	5	3	11	23	38	18
Hampton	19	4	5	10	22	42	17
Carshalton	20	4	5	11	20	40	17
B Stortford	20	3	7	10	28	46	16
Heybridge	20	3	5	12	19	48	14

DR MARTENS LEAGUE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Nuneaton	21	14	5	2	49	18	47
Bath City	19	10	3	6	29	16	33
Ilkeston Tn	21	8	9	4	31	23	33
Crawley Town	18	10	3	5	28	23	33
Gresley Rovers	17	10	2	5	26	19	32
Boston Utd	21	7	9	5	34	24	30
Hastings	19	8	5	6	21	17	29
Gloucester City	19	8	5	6	29	27	29
Atherstone	18	7	7	4	26	22	28
Cambridge City	21	8	4	9	25	30	28
Merthyr	20	8	3	9	33	30	27
Grantham	18	8	1	9	28	27	25
Rothwell Town	19	6	7	6	19	25	25
Weymouth	20	6	6	8	26	28	24
Worcester City	18	7	3	8	16	24	24
Halesowen	21	6	5	10	28	34	23
Tamworth	18	7	2	9	25	31	23
Burton Albion	18	6	3	9	22	28	21
Salisbury	18	5	5	8	21	31	20
Bromsgrove	20	5	3	12	23	40	18
Dorchester	19	4	5	10	22	31	17
Kings Lynn	18	4	3	12	21	33	15

POOLS CHECK: Half-time: Score draws (total 5): 21, 29, 40, 41, 42. **No-score draws** (12): 1, 5, 10, 14, 15, 17, 19, 20, 24, 35, 39, 47. **Full-time: Score draws** (5): 2, 6, 14, 21, 25, 33. **No-score draws** (1): 10.

Nationwide League

FIRST DIVISION

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Sunderland	24	15	8	1	53	15	53
Ipswich	24	13	6	5	33	15	45
Bradford	23	12	4	7	42	27	40
Watford	24	11	7	6	42	36	40
Norwich	23	11	7	5	39	30	40
Bolton	23	10	9	4	44	32	39
Birmingham	24	11	6	7	37	24	39
Huddersfield	24	11	5	8	35	40	38
Grimsby	24	11	5	8	30	27	38
West Brom	24	10	4	10	43	40	34
Sheff Utd	24	9	7	8	37	40	34
Wolverhampton	24	9	7	8	34	28	34
Barnsley	24	7	9	8	35	33	30
Crystal Palace	23	8	6	9	33	38	30
Stockport	24	6	11	7	30	31	29
Bury	24	7	7	10	20	28	28
Swindon	24	7	6	11	34	40	27
Tranmere	24	5	12	7	31	35	27
QPR	24	7	5	12	28	34	26
Port Vale	24	7	4	13	27	45	25
Portsmouth	24	6	6	12	32	39	24
Oxford Utd	24	6	5	13	26	45	23
Bristol City	24	4	8	12	34	52	20
Crewe	24	3	6	15	24	49	15

Barnsley (0) 1 Swindon (3) 3
Barnard 85 (pen) — Onuora 15, 26, Hay 28
Barnsley: Bullock, Eaden, Moses, Jones, Tinkler (Richardson 84), Appleby, McClare (Marcelle 46), Hignett, Barton (Turner 59), Dyer, Barnard.
Swindon Town: Talia, Robinson, Hall, Leitch, Taylor, Hulbert (Bullock 61), Howe, Hay (Walters 59), Onuora, Ndah, Davis. Sub not used: Watson.
Att: 15,342. Ref: M Jones (Chester).

Birmingham (0) 0 Sunderland (0) 0
Birmingham City: Poole, Rowett, Marsh (Wassall 86), Robinson, Ablett, Johnson, McCarthy, Adebola, Furlong, O'Connor, Ndlovu. Subs not used: Forster, Hughes.
Sunderland: Sorensen, Makin, Scott, Ball, Melville, Butler, Rae (Williams 73), Clark, Quinn (Dichio 71), Bridges, Gray (McCann 73).
Att: 22,095. Ref: M Halsey (Welwyn Gdn C).

Bolton (0) 3 Portsmouth (1) 1
Taylor 70, Frandsen 78, Holdsworth 84 — Igoe 1
Bolton: Jaaskelainen, Phillips, Whitlow, Frandsen, Warhurst, Newsome, Johansen, Jensen, Gudmundsson (Holdsworth 57), Taylor, Sellars (Gardner 65). Sub not used: Fish.
Portsmouth: Petterson, Thogersen, Robinson, McLoughlin (Simpson 71), Hillier, Awford, Thomson, Peron, Vlachos (Nightingale 80), Claridge (Phillips 80), Igoe.
Att: 15,961. Ref: M Pike (Barrow-in-Furness).

Bradford (1) 2 Wolves (0) 1
Blake 20, Mills 50 — Keane 67
Bradford City: Walsh, Wright (Westwood 87), Jacobs, McCall, Moore, O'Brien, Lawrence, Blake, Mills (Watson 83), Whalley, Beagrie. Sub not used: Rankin.
Wolverhampton: Stowell, Atkins, Naylor, Richards (Gilkes 82), Sedgley, Curle, Corica (Whittingham 62), Robinson, Connolly, Keane, Emblen. Sub not used: Niestroj.
Att: 13,846. Ref: S Bennett (Orpington).

Crewe (0) 1 Huddersfield (1) 2
Jack 76 — Stewart 13, 48
Crewe: Kearton, Bignot (Street 83), Smith, Macauley, Unsworth, Charnock, Wright, Johnson, Anthrobus, Little (Jack 63), Rivers. Sub not used: Foran.
Huddersfield: Vaesen, Jenkins, Edwards, Johnson, Hessey, Gray, Richardson, Beech, Stewart, Allison, Beresford. Subs not used: Cowan, Phillips, Facey.
Att: 5,102. Ref: P Danson (Leicester).

C Palace (0) 1 QPR (0) 1
Rodger 61 — Steiner 78
Crystal Palace: Miller, Crowe, Rizzo (Curcic 76), Burton, Linighan, Foster, Rodger, Mullins, Bradbury (Morrison 66), Jansen, Smith. Sub not used: Petric.
QPR: Miklosko, Heinola, Baraclough, Morrow, Ready, Maddix (Rowland 78), Rose, Peacock, Sheron, Gallen, Murray (Steiner 64). Sub not used: Kulcsar.
Att: 17,684. Ref: M Pierce (Portsmouth).

Grimsby (0) 2 Watford (0) 1
D. Smith 48, Groves 88 — Noel-Williams 73
Grimsby Town: Davison, McDermott, Gallimore, Handyside, R. Smith, Coldicott (Widdrington 45), Ashcroft, D. Smith, Nogan, Black (Clare 77), Groves. Sub not used: Butterfield.
Watford: Chamberlain, Bazeley, Kennedy, Page, Palmer, Robinson, Smart (Mooney 88), Hyde, Noel-Williams, Johnson, Wright (Gudmundsson 45). Sub not used: Easton.
Att: 5,579. Ref: J Kirkby (Sheffield).

Norwich (2) 2 Bristol City (1) 1
Roberts 18, 36 — Akinbiyi 20
Norwich City: Watt, Kenton, Mackay, Grant, Wilson, Jackson, Adams (Sutch 65), Eadie, Roberts, Russell (Marshall 73), Llewellyn. Sub not used: Fleming.
Bristol City: Phillips, Brennan, Bell, Hutchings, Shail, Carey, R. Edwards (Andersen 40), Thorpe, Akinbiyi, Murray, Goodridge (Torpey 57). Sub not used: C. Edwards.
Att: 17,022. Ref: J Brandwood (Lichfield).

Port Vale (0) 1 Bury (0) 0
Barker 72 (pen)
Port Vale: Pilkington, Walsh, Tankard, Bogie, Barnett, Aspin, Lytle, Barker, Naylor, Foyle, Jansson. Subs not used: Beadle, McQuade, Horlaville.
Bury: Kiely, Woodward, Williams, Daws, Luckett, Billy, Barrick, Foster (Avdiu 77), D'Jaffo (James 70), Johnrose, Preece. Sub not used: West.
Att: 5,425. Ref: T Jones (Barrow-in-Furness).

Sheff Utd (0) 1 Ipswich (0) 2
Devlin 78 — Abou 49, Naylor 90
Sheff Utd: Kelly, Borbokis, Quinn, Ford (Devlin 74), Derry, O'Connor, Woodhouse, Marker, Marcelo, Hamilton (Morris 59), Campbell. Subs not used: Wilder.
Ipswich: Wright, Kennedy, Tanner (Brown 85), Clapham, Mowbray, Bramble, Dyer, Holland, Abou (Hodges 90), Naylor, Petta. Subs not used: Logan.
Att: 12,944. Ref: R Styles (Waterlooville).

Stockport (1) 2 Oxford (0) 0
Matthews 44, Dinning 68 (pen)
Stockport County: Nash, Connelly, Dinning, Hughes, Flynn, McIntosh, Matthews, McInnes, Angell (Grant 65), Moore, Cooper (Wilbraham 84). Sub not used: Gannon.
Oxford United: Gerrard, Robinson, Powell, Whelan, Wilsterman, Gilchrist (Rose 8), Watson, Smith; Thomson, Windass (Banger 73), Murphy (Beauchamp 73).
Att: 6,500. Ref: R Furnandiz (Doncaster).

WBA (0) 0 Tranmere (0) 2
Challinor 50, Irons 88 (pen)
WBA: Whitehead, Holmes, Potter, Flynn, Murphy, Mardon, Maresca (Evans 58), Sneekes, De Freitas (Angel 58), Hughes, Kilbane (Carbon 79).
Tranmere Rovers: Coyne, Allen, Thompson, McGreal, Challinor, Irons, Mellon, Santos, Kelly (Jones 35), Mahon, Taylor. Subs not used: Morrissey, Parkinson.
Att: 13,965. Ref: P Robinson (Hull).

Leading goalscorers (total): **24** Hughes (West Brom). **16** Stewart (Huddersfield). **15** Bellamy (Norwich); Roberts (Norwich); Ward (Barnsley). **14** Mills (Bradford C); Onuora (Swindon); Gunnlaugsson (Bolton). **13** Irons (Tranmere), Akinbiyi (Bristol C). **11** Groves (Grimsby); Johnson (Ipswich); Scowcroft (Ipswich); Keane (Wolverhampton); Bridges (Sunderland).

FA CARLING PREMIERSHIP: Leading goalscorers (total): **17** Aloisi (Coventry; 17 for Portsmouth). **13** Dublin (Aston Villa; four for Coventry); Owen (Liverpool); Ricard (Middlesbrough). **12** Blake (Blackburn; Nine for Bolton); Yorke (Man Utd). **10** Hasselbaink (Leeds); Poyet (Chelsea); Cole (Man Utd). **9** Zola (Chelsea); Fowler (Liverpool); Heskey (Leicester); Solskjaer (Man Utd).

SECOND DIVISION

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Fulham	21	14	3	4	33	16	45
Walsall	22	14	3	5	33	24	45
Stoke	22	14	2	6	30	16	44
Preston	21	10	7	4	37	22	37
Gillingham	22	9	10	3	33	18	37
Bournemouth	20	9	6	5	32	21	33
Chesterfield	21	9	6	6	22	15	33
Millwall	22	8	8	6	22	23	32
Reading*	21	8	7	6	25	27	31
Wigan	22	8	6	8	28	22	30
Luton	20	8	6	6	27	23	30
Man City	22	7	9	6	25	21	30
Blackpool	22	7	8	7	27	27	29
York	22	7	6	9	28	37	27
Colchester	21	6	8	7	21	26	26
Bristol Rovers	22	5	10	7	24	25	25
Wrexham	22	6	7	9	21	29	25
Northampton	22	5	9	8	21	23	24
Burnley	22	6	5	11	22	38	23
Notts County	21	5	6	10	23	32	21
Macclesfield	22	4	9	9	19	28	21
Wycombe	22	4	7	11	20	27	19
Oldham	22	4	6	12	20	35	18
Lincoln City	22	3	4	15	21	42	13

Bristol R (0) 0 Macclesfield (0) 0
Bristol Rvrs: Jones, Leoni, Challis, Zabek, Foster, Trought, Shore, Trees (McKeever 55), Ipoua (Penrice 62), Cureton, Roberts. Subs not used: Smith.
Macclesfield: Price, Hitchen, Ingram, Howarth, McDonald, Sodje, Davies, Sorvel (Wood 82), Tomlinson, Smith (Askey 45), Matias (Whittaker 74).
Att: 5,039. Ref: M Fletcher (Warley).

Burnley (0) 0 Northampton (0) 2
Wilkinson 71, Corazzin 81
Burnley: Crichton, Pickering, O'Kane (Eastwood 76), Ford, Heywood, Reid, Robertson (Henderson 72), Brass, Cooke, Payton, Armstrong. Sub not used: Morgan.
Northampton Town: Turley, Gibb, Frain, Sampson, Hill, Hope, Hunt, Savage, Corazzin, Wilkinson, Spedding. Subs not used: Seal, Warner, Hunter.
Att: 8,763. Ref: A Hall (Birmingham).

Colchester (1) 2 Blackpool (1) 2
Green 7, D Gregory 78 — Ormerod 11, Hughes 88
Colchester: Emberson, Dunne, Betts, Williams, Greene, Abrahams (Sale 75), Wilkins, D. Gregory, Dozzell, N Gregory (Lock 88), Stamps. Subs not used: Buckle.
Blackpool: Barnes, Hughes, Hills, Bardsley, Carlisle, Butler, Patterson, Clarkson, Ormerod, Bushell (Bent 83), Malkin (Nowland 16). Subs not used: Robinson.
Att: 3,228. Ref: S Baines (Chesterfield).

Chesterfield (1) 1 Wigan (1) 1
Greenall 16
Chesterfield: Mercer, Hewitt, Jules, Curtis, Williams, Breckin, Howard, Beaumont, Reeves, Ebdon, Wilkinson (Blatherwick 80). Subs not used: Lenagh, Lomas.
Wigan Athletic: Carroll, Green, Bradshaw, McGibbon, Balmer, Porter, Lee, Greenall, Liddell, O'Neill, Barlow (Jones 78). Subs not used: Kilford, Jenkinson.
Att: 3,898. Ref: P Walton (Winwick).

Gillingham (1) 4 Notts County (0) 0
Asaba 33, 81, 89, Taylor 71
Gillingham: Bartram, Southall, Ashby, Smith, Bryant, Pennock, Patterson, Hessenthaler (Hodge 28), Asaba, Galloway, Taylor. Subs not used: Butters, Nosworthy.
Notts County: Ward, Hendon, Dyer, Redmile, Strodder, Richardson, Owers, Liburd (Garcia 71), Foley (Quayle 60), Jackson, Murray. Sub not used: Tierney.
Att: 6,072. Ref: L Cable (Woking).

Luton (0) 1 Millwall (1) 2
S. Davis 69 — Harris 45, Neill 82
Luton Town: K. Davis, McGowan, Fraser, Spring, S. Davis, Johnson, Scarlett, McLaren, Douglas, Gray (White 77), Showler (Fotiadis 63). Sub not used: McIndoe.
Millwall: Spink, Lavin, Ryan, Cahill, Stuart, Fitzgerald, Reid (Hockton 71), Newman (Stevens 45), Harris, Shaw, Neill. Sub not used: Sadlier.
Att: 5,939. Ref: E Lomas (Manchester).

Preston (0) 0 Fulham (0) 1
Coleman 86
Preston North End: Lucas, Parkinson, Ludden (Appleton 28), Kidd, Jackson, Gregan, Cartwright, Rankine, Nogan (Byfield 58), Harris, Darby (Macken 88).
Fulham: Taylor, Uhlenbeek, Brevett, Morgan, Coleman, Symons, Hayward, Bracewell (Finnan 68), Horsfield, Peschisolido (Hayles 75), Smith. Sub not used: Lehmann.
Att: 12,321. Ref: C Wilkes (Gloucester).

Reading (1) 1 Oldham (0) 1
McIntyre 29 — Allott 56
Reading: Howie, Crawford, Clement, Parkinson, Kromheer, Casper, Glasgow (Wright 55), Caskey, McIntyre, Sarr (Brayson 85), Brebner. Sub not used: Bernal.
Oldham Athletic: Miskelly, McNiven, Holt, Sinnott, Rickers, Duxbury, Thom, Sheridan, Tipton (Allott 54), Whitehall (Innes 90), Reid. Sub not used: Swan.
Att: 9,390. Ref: K Hill (Royston).

Walsall (1) 1 Stoke (0) 0
Rammell 41
Walsall: Walker, Marsh, Pointon, Keates, Green, Roper, Wrack, Otta (Brissett 87), Rammell, Larusson, Simpson. Subs not used: Gadsby, Porter.
Stoke City: Muggleton, Forsyth, Small, Sigurdsson, Robinson, Woods (Petty 82), Kean, Kavanagh, Thorne, Lightbourne (Crowe 21), Oldfield (Wallace 82).
Att: 9,068. Ref: E Wolstenholme (Blackburn).

Wrexham (0) 0 Bournemouth (1) 1
Fletcher 21
Wrexham: Cartwright, McGregor, Hardy, Brammer, Ridler, Spink, Cooke, Russell (Chalk 73), Connolly, Roberts (Edwards 80), Ward. Sub not used: Walsh.
Bournemouth: Ovendale, Young, Vincent, Howe, Warren, Rawlinson (Rodrigues 89), Cox, Robinson, Stein, Fletcher, Bell. Subs not used: Town, Dean.
Att: 2,716. Ref: M Cowburn (Blackpool).

Wycombe (2) 4 Lincoln (0) 1
Brown 19, Carroll 45, McSporran 79, 84 — Gordon 80
Wycombe Wanderers: Taylor, Lawrence, Vinnicombe (Kavanagh 90), McCarthy, Cousins, Mohan (Ryan 78), Simpson, Brown, McSporran (Read 90), Scott, Carroll.
Lincoln City: Grobbelaar, Barnett, Bimson (Thorpe 58), Fleming, Watts, Austin, Smith, Holmes (Finnigan 46), Battersby, Gordon (Alcide 73), Brabin.
Att: 4,731. Ref: M Dean (Eastham).

York (1) 2 Man C (1) 1
Connelly 2, Dawson 86 — Russell 33
York: Mimms, McMillan, Hall, Garrett, Jones, Barras, Connelly (Dawson 84), Jordan, Cresswell, Tolson (Rowe 78), Himsworth. Sub not used: Prendergast.
Man C: Weaver, Horlock, Edghill, Fenton, Vaughan, Crooks, Brown, Pollock (Whitley 89), Taylor, Bishop, Russell (Allsopp 79). Sub not used: Mason.
Att: 7,527. Ref: W C Burns (Scarborough).

Leading goalscorers (total): **16** Stein (Bournemouth). **15** Asaba (Gillingham; one for Reading). **14** Cresswell (York); Payton (Burnley). **12** Rammell (Walsall); Horsfield (Fulham; eight for Halifax). **11** Hayles (Fulham; 10 for Bristol Rvrs); Barlow (Wigan); Goater (Man C); Gray (Luton). **10** Cureton (Bristol Rvrs); Davis (Luton). **9** Corazzin (Northampton); Williams (Reading); Shaw (Millwall).

LEAGUE OF WALES: Barry Tn 5 Aberystwyth 1; Caernarfon Tn 2 TNS 1; Caersws 0 Rhayader Tn 0; Cwmbran 4 Holywell 0; Haverfordwest 1 Carmarthen Tn 2; Rhyl 1 Inter Cable-Tel 2. **Postponed:** Connah's Quay v Newtown.
IRISH LEAGUE: Premier Division: Ballymena 0 Glenavon 1; Cliftonville 0 Coleraine 0; Crusaders 2 Omagh Tn 0; Glentoran 5 Newry 1. **First Division:** Ards 3 Limavady Utd 0; Ballyclare 3 Bangor 0; Distillery 1 Larne 0; Dungannon Swifts 2 Carrick 1.

THIRD DIVISION

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Cardiff	22	13	4	5	29	18	43
Brentford	20	13	0	7	36	26	39
Mansfield	22	11	4	7	34	27	37
Halifax	22	10	7	5	31	20	37
Peterborough	22	11	3	8	39	28	36
Cambridge Utd	21	11	3	7	39	25	36
Leyton Orient	22	9	7	6	28	28	34
Rotherham	22	9	6	7	40	32	33
Scunthorpe	22	10	3	9	36	38	33
Darlington	20	9	4	7	30	24	31
Brighton	22	10	1	11	29	31	31
Swansea	21	8	7	6	28	21	31
Plymouth	21	9	3	9	25	20	30
Rochdale	21	7	7	7	21	23	28
Chester	21	6	9	6	28	30	27
Southend	22	7	6	9	29	32	27
Barnet	22	8	3	11	27	38	27
Exeter	21	7	5	9	21	24	26
Hartlepool	22	7	4	11	32	37	25
Torquay	22	5	9	8	24	30	24
Shrewsbury	22	6	6	10	17	26	24
Carlisle	20	6	5	9	18	22	23
Scarborough	22	6	3	13	23	34	21
Hull	22	4	3	15	18	40	15

Barnet (1) 3 Leyton Orient (0) 2
Wilson 31 (pen), Basham 86, Charlery 89 — Simba 58, Beall 68
Barnet: Harrison, Stockley, Currie, Basham, Ford, Arber, Searle, Doolan, Charlery, McGleish, Wilson. Subs not used: Onwere, Heald, King.
Leyton Orient: MacKenzie, Walschaerts, Lockwood, Smith, Hicks, Clark, Ling, Joseph, Richards, Simba, Beall. Subs not used: Inglethorpe, Watts, Canham.
Att: 3,129. Ref: T Bates (Stoke-on-Trent).

Brentford (1) 1 Cambridge U (0) 0
Folan 5
Brentford: Dearden, Mahon, Anderson, Hreidarsson, Quinn, Bates, Freeman, Hebel (Oatway 46), Owusu (Fortune-West 88), Rowlands, Folan. Subs not used: Bryan.
Cambridge Utd: Marshall, Chenery, Ashbee, Duncan, Joseph, Campbell, Wanless, Taylor (Walker 73), Butler, Benjamin, Russell. Subs not used: Preece, Youngs.
Att: 5,069. Ref: A Butler (Sutton-in-Ashfield).

Cardiff (1) 4 Mansfield (0) 2
Williams 12, 46, Nugent 61, 81 — Harper 53, Christie 58
Cardiff City: Hallworth, Delaney, Ford, Mitchell, Young, Carpenter, Hill (Legg 89), O'Sullivan, Williams, Nugent (Thomas 85), Middleton. Sub not used: Earnshaw.
Mansfield Town: Naylor, Ford, Harper, Ryder, Kerr (Walker 45), Hackett, Schofield, Clarke, Christie, Peacock, Tallon (Williams 82). Sub not used: Bowling.
Att: 9,013. Ref: R Olivier (Sutton Coldfield).

Darlington (1) 3 Scunthorpe (0) 1
Naylor 5, Leah 35, Bennett 89 — Bramwell 83 (og)
Darlington: Preece, Bramwell, Barnard, Liddle, Tutill, Bennett, Leah, Oliver, Naylor (Dorner 90), Gabbiadini (Ellison 90), Atkinson. Sub not used: Pepper.
Scunthorpe: Clarke, Fickling, Harsley, Logan (Calvo-Garcia 63), Wilcox, Hope, Walker, Forrester, Eyre, Gayle (Marshall 80), Dawson. Sub not used: Bull.
Att: 2,465. Ref: D Pugh (Wirral).

Halifax (0) 1 Exeter (0) 1
Williams 85 — Stoneman 33 (og)
Halifax Town: Martin, Thackeray, Bradshaw (Newton 58), Sertori, Lucas, Stoneman, Paterson, Butler, Williams, Guinan (Hanson 33), Brown. Sub not used: Murphy.
Exeter City: Bayes, Fry, Power, Baddeley, Gale, Gittens, Rowbotham, Holloway, Flack, Curran, Gardner. Subs not used: Breslan, Wilkinson, Clark.
Att: 2,342. Ref: B Cain (Bootle).

Hartlepool (1) 2 Southend (3) 4
Di Lella 5, Howard 90 — Houghton 16, Newman 27, Fitzpatrick 34, Conlon 80
Hartlepool United: Hollund, Knowles, Ingram, Barron, Lee, McGuckin, Brightwell (Irvine 70), Di Lella, Howard, Midgley (Stokoe 62), Stephenson. Sub not used: Downey.
Southend United: Margetson, Beard, Burns (Clarke 90), Morley, Newman (Roget 87), Coleman, Maher, Livett, Conlon, Fitzpatrick, Houghton. Sub not used: Jones.
Att: 1,889. Ref: P Richards (Preston).

Hull (0) 0 Swansea (2) 2
Appleby 35, Watkin 40
Hull City: Oakes, Hocking, Swales, Whittle, Perry, Whitney, Joyce, Hawes (McGinty 88), Brown, Faulconbridge (Morley 69), Dudley. Sub not used: Edwards.
Swansea City: Freestone, Jones, Howard, Cusack, Smith, Bound, Coates, Thomas, Alsop, Watkin, Appleby (Roberts 90). Subs not used: Bird, Jenkins.
Att: 4,280. Ref: P Dowd (Stoke-on-Trent).

Peterboro (2) 3 Scarborough (0) 1
Farrell 18, Edwards 25, McKenzie 82 — Dabelsteen 65
Peterborough United: Tyler, Scott, Drury, Davies, Bodley, Edwards, Farrell, Castle, Broughton (Grazioli 89), McKenzie, Etherington (Hanlon 87). Sub not used: Hooper.
Scarborough: Weaver, Jackson, Atkinson (McNaughton 80), Robinson (Radigan 80), Lydiate, Marinkov, Worrall, Hoyland, Russell, Greenacre (Renshaw 87), Dabelsteen.
Att: 4,444. Ref: M Warren (Walsall).

Plymouth (1) 2 Carlisle (0) 0
Bastow 22, McCarthy 83
Plymouth Argyle: Sheffield, Ashton, Beswetherick, Bastow, Branston, Wotton, Barlow, Hargreaves, McCarthy, Jean (Sweeney 66), Phillips (Forinton 66). Sub not used: Marshall.
Carlisle United: Caig, Barr, Searle, Paterson, Brightwell, Varty (Whitehead 46), Couzens (McGregor 46), Clark, Stevens (Finney 75), Anthony, Mendes.
Att: 4,236. Ref: B Jordan (Tring).

Rochdale (0) 2 Brighton (0) 1
Painter 69, Monington 88 — Mayo 65
Rochdale: Edwards, Sparrow, Barlow, Hill, Monington, Farrell, Carden, Painter, Holt, Bryson, Peake. Subs not used: Stuart, Williams, Jones.
Brighton: Ormerod, Browne, Mayo, Minton, Bennett (Johnson 46), Arnott, Thomas (Storer 73), Armstrong, Hart, Barker, Culverhouse. Sub not used: Sturgess.
Att: 2,153. Ref: B Coddington (Sheffield).

Rotherham (0) 2 Chester (1) 4
Glover 78, White 89 — Priest 17, Conroy 61, 74, Murphy 83
Rotherham: Pollitt, G. Scott (Thompson 54), Dillon (Berry 17), Garner, Warner, Raven, Sedgwick (White 84), Ingledow, R. Scott, Glover, Hurst.
Chester: Cutler, Davidson, Smith, Richardson, Crosby, Woods, Flitcroft, Priest, Murphy, Conroy, Alston (Wright 89). Subs not used: Shelton, Reid.
Att: 2,898. Ref: G Laws (Whitley Bay).

Shrewsbury (0) 1 Torquay (1) 2
Evans 74 — Partridge 33, 88
Shrewsbury: Edwards (Tretton 15), Brown, Whelan, Wilding, Gayle, Hanmer, Jobling, Evans, Berkley, Beavers (Jagielka 56), Steele. Subs not used: Craven.
Torquay: Southall, Tully, Robinson, Thomas, Aggrey, Herrera, Leadbitter, McGorry, Hill, Lee (Bedeau 74), Partridge. Subs not used: Healy, Hapgood.
Att: 1,934. Ref: M Messias (York).

Leading goalscorers (total): **13** Peacock (Mansfield); Forrester (Scunthorpe); Owusu (Brentford). **12** Glover (Rotherham). **11** Partridge (Torquay); Butler (Cambridge Utd); Williams (Cardiff). **10** Charlery (Barnet); McKenzie (Peterborough); Benjamin (Cambridge Utd). **9** Beech (Hartlepool); Paterson (Halifax). **8** Grazioli (Peterborough); Hart (Brighton); Minton (Brighton).

FA WOMEN'S PREMIER LEAGUE: National Division: Everton 0 Tranmere Rvrs 4; Liverpool 1 Doncaster 2; Millwall 0 Arsenal 1; Southampton 1 Croydon 0. **Postponed:** Bradford C v Ilkeston Tn.

Scotland

PREMIER LEAGUE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Rangers	18	11	4	3	34	16	37
Kilmarnock	19	9	7	3	27	11	34
Celtic	19	8	6	5	39	20	30
St Johnstone	19	7	8	4	23	25	29
Hearts	19	6	5	8	21	26	23
Motherwell	19	5	7	7	17	26	22
Dundee	18	5	5	8	17	26	20
Aberdeen	19	5	5	9	19	29	20
Dundee Utd	19	4	7	8	18	22	19
Dunfermline	19	2	10	7	15	30	16

Celtic (0) 5 Dunfermline (0) 0
Larsson 55, 67 (pen), Mjallby 80, Moravcik 63, 72
Celtic: Gould, Boyd, Mahe, Stubbs, Larsson, O'Donnell (Brattbakk 84), Donnelly (Riseth 80), Lambert, Moravcik, Burchill, Mjallby (Annoni 72). Subs not used: McBride, Gallagher.
Dunfermline: Butler, Shields, McCulloch, Millar, French, Smith, Petrie, Edinho (Templeman 76), Squires, Graham (Shaw 68), Ferguson (Martin 63). Subs not used: Westwater, Fraser.
Att: 59,024. Ref: B Orr (Kilbarchan).

Dundee (1) 1 Aberdeen (1) 2
Rae 18 — Winters 45, 83
Dundee: Douglas, Smith, Adamczuk, Irvine, Annand, McInally (Anderson 71), Falconer, McSkimming, Miller, Rae, Tweed. Subs not used: Rogers, Grady, Grant, Langfield.
Aberdeen: Leighton, Perry, Whyte, Pepper, Inglis, Jess, Kiriakov, Dow, Bochan, Rowson, Winters. Subs not used: Newell, Stillie, Gillies, Hart, Good.
Att: 6,340. Ref: M McCurry (Glasgow).

Hearts (1) 2 Rangers (1) 3
Locke 2, Hamilton 68 — Guivarc'h 18, 53, Wallace 58
Hearts: Rousset, McPherson, Weir, Ritchie, Fulton, Adam (Juanjo 75), Hamilton, Locke (Quitongo 82), Flogel, McKinnon, Murray (Makel 70). Subs not used: Hogarth, Horn.
Rangers: Niemi, Porrini, Amoruso, B. Ferguson, Kanchelskis, Van Bronckhorst, Albertz, Guivarc'h, Wallace, Stensaas (I Ferguson 45), Vidmar, I Ferguson (McCann 79). Subs not used: Amato, Brown, Malcolm.
Att: 17,134. Ref: S Dougal (Glasgow).

Kilmarnock (1) 2 Dundee Utd (0) 0
Wright 30, Durrant 87 (pen)
Kilmarnock: Marshall, MacPherson, Baker, Montgomerie, McGowne, Reilly, Mitchell, Holt, McCoist (Roberts 79), Wright (McCutcheon 84), Durrant (Mahood 89). Subs not used: Strain, Lauchlan.
Dundee Utd: Combe, Patterson, Pedersen (Paterson 79), Olofsson, Zetterlund, Dolan, Mathie (Miller 67), Dodds, De Vos, Mols (Thompson 67), Pascual. Subs not used: Dykstra, Skoldmark.
Att: 13,535. Ref: H Dallas (Motherwell).

Motherwell (1) 1 St Johnstone (1) 2
Adams 27 — Connolly 31, Grant 72
Motherwell: Kaven, May (Nevin 65), McMillan, McGowan (Nicholas 82), Brannan, Valakari, Coyle, Thomas, Doesburg, Adams (McCulloch 63), Spencer. Subs not used: Christie, Bannister.
St Johnstone: Main, McQuillan, Dasovic, Kernaghan, O'Neil, Kane, McMahon, Connolly (McAnespie 87), Griffin, Dods, Lowndes (Grant 59). Subs not used: McCulloch, Robertson, Simao.
Att: 5,700. Ref: W Young (Clarkston).

Leading goalscorers (total): **18** Larsson (Celtic). **16** Wallace (Rangers). **13** Albertz (Rangers). **10** Adams (Motherwell).

FIRST DIVISION

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Hibernian	20	13	5	2	41	22	44
Falkirk	20	11	5	4	33	18	38
Ayr	20	11	3	6	41	25	36
Airdrie	20	11	3	6	27	21	36
St Mirren	20	8	4	8	17	25	28
Clydebank	20	6	7	7	19	24	25
Hamilton	20	5	7	8	25	32	22
Gr Morton	20	5	4	11	20	25	19
Raith	20	4	7	9	19	28	19
Stranraer	20	3	1	16	18	40	10

Ayr (2) 5 Hamilton (0) 0
Hurst 13, 31, 60, Walker 85, 88. Att: 2,102

Hibernian (1) 3 Clydebank (0) 0
McGinlay 10, 90, Latapy 90. Att: 9,060

Raith (1) 1 Morton (3) 3
Cameron 13. Att: 2,731 — Thomas 3, Curran 17, 27

St Mirren (0) 0 Falkirk (2) 3
Att: 2,137 — Crabbe 28, Henry 34, McAllister 65

Stranraer (0) 1 Airdrie (0) 2
Campbell 54. Att: 882 — Cooper 52, Wilson 58

SECOND DIVISION

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Livingston	19	13	5	1	36	19	44
Inverness CT	19	11	5	3	39	26	38
Clyde	19	9	6	4	28	19	33
Stirling	19	9	2	8	29	31	29
Alloa	19	8	3	8	42	29	27
Partick	19	8	2	9	20	22	26
Arbroath	19	7	4	8	19	24	25
East Fife	19	5	4	10	23	37	19
Queen of South	19	3	5	11	18	27	14
Forfar	19	2	4	13	19	37	10

Alloa (2) 3 Forfar (0) 1
McKechnie 15, 38, Irvine 82 (pen) — McLain 75. Att: 466

Arbroath (0) 2 East Fife (1) 1
Sellars 65, 90. Att: 701 — Martin 44

Clyde (1) 2 Queen of Sth (1) 1
Carrigan 37, Convery 78 — Rowe 21. Att: 794

Livingston (0) 0 Stirling Alb (0) 0
Att: 2,503

Partick (2) 2 Inverness CT (0) 1
Tosh 15, Connell 19 — Wilson 87 (pen). Att: 2,141

THIRD DIVISION

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Ross County	19	14	1	4	49	20	43
Brechin	19	11	6	2	24	13	39
Stenhousemuir	19	10	3	6	30	19	33
Dumbarton	19	8	4	7	25	21	28
Berwick	19	5	9	5	23	23	24
Albion	19	7	3	9	23	36	24
Queen's Park	19	5	6	8	23	24	21
Cowdenbeath	19	5	3	11	20	35	18
East Stirling	19	3	8	8	22	25	17
Montrose	19	3	5	11	18	41	14

Berwick (1) 1 Albion (0) 1
Leask 34. Att: 307 — Melvin 67

Brechin (0) 1 Queens Park (0) 0
Bain 61. Att: 318

Cowdnbth (1) 3 East Stirlng (0) 2
Milne 25, Thomson 45, Bradley 80 — Walker 54, Humphreys 85 (og). Att: 212

Dumbartn (0) 1 Stenhousemr (4) 4
Wilson 80. Att: 283 — Gibson 12, Bapte 39, Christie 42, Hamilton 45

Ross Co (1) 3 Montrose (0) 0
Ferries 32, Tarrant 63, Taylor 88. Att: 1,571

HIGHLAND LEAGUE: Cove Rngrs 7 Deveronvale 2; Elgin C 0 Huntly 2; Lossiemouth 4 Nairn Co 1; Peterhead 5 Forres Mech 1. All other matches postponed.

Europe

ITALY

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Fiorentina	14	9	2	3	26	14	29
Parma	14	7	5	2	23	9	26
Milan	14	7	4	3	21	16	25
*Roma	13	6	5	2	27	14	23
Lazio	14	6	5	3	27	16	23
Bologna	14	5	6	3	17	11	21
*Internazionale	13	6	3	4	22	19	21
Juventus	14	6	3	5	15	14	21
Perugia	14	5	4	5	20	24	19
Bari	14	3	9	2	16	15	18
Piacenza	14	4	4	6	18	18	16
Udinese	14	4	4	6	16	24	16
Cagliari	14	4	2	8	19	20	14
Sampdoria	14	3	5	6	14	27	14
Empoli	14	3	5	6	12	20	12
Vicenza	14	2	6	6	8	17	12
Salernitana	14	3	3	8	11	23	12
Venezia	14	2	5	7	5	14	11

(*=Not including late match)
Note: Empoli deducted two points for attempted match fixing

Cagliari	0	Bologna	1
Empoli	3	Parma	5
Juventus	3	Salernitana	0
Lazio	3	Udinese	1
Perugia	2	Fiorentina	2
Piacenza	3	Bari	2
Sampdoria	2	Milan	2
Vicenza	0	Venezia	0

SPAIN

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Mallorca	15	8	5	2	18	8	29
Celta Vigo	15	6	7	2	25	16	25
Valencia	15	8	1	6	24	17	25
Dep Coruna	15	6	6	3	20	16	24
Oviedo	15	7	3	5	16	17	24
Atletico Madrid	15	6	5	4	22	14	23
Athletic Bilbao	15	7	2	6	21	21	23
Real Madrid	14	6	4	4	27	21	22
Barcelona	15	6	4	5	23	18	22
Real Sociedad	15	6	4	5	21	20	22
Real Zaragoza	15	6	3	6	18	19	21
Villarreal	15	5	4	6	21	20	19
Real Betis	15	5	4	6	10	17	19
Rac Santander	15	4	6	5	16	18	18
Valladolid	15	5	3	6	15	17	18
Espanyol	15	4	5	6	15	17	17
Alaves	15	4	3	8	10	18	15
Salamanca	14	4	3	7	12	21	15
Tenerife	15	2	7	6	17	27	13
Extremadura	15	3	3	9	9	24	12

Alaves	1	Salamanca	0
Atletico Madrid	0	Real Zaragoza	0
Espanyol	2	Valencia	1
Mallorca	1	Racing Santander	1
Oviedo	1	Real Madrid	0
Real Sociedad	2	Celta Vigo	0
Villarreal	0	Athletic Bilbao	1
Tenerife	1	Extremadura	1
Valladolid	0	Barcelona	1
Saturday			
Dep Coruna	2	Real Betis	2

GERMANY

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Bayern Munich	18	14	2	2	43	13	44
B Leverkusen	18	10	6	2	40	18	36
Kaiserslautern	18	10	4	4	29	28	34
1860 Munich	18	9	5	4	32	24	32
B Dortmund	18	8	5	5	28	18	29
Hertha Berlin	18	9	2	7	26	19	29
VfL Wolfsburg	18	7	6	5	34	28	27
Hamburg SV	18	6	6	6	23	23	24
Werder Bremen	18	6	5	7	27	25	23
SC Freiburg	18	5	7	6	21	23	22
VfB Stuttgart	18	5	6	7	23	25	21
Schalke 04	18	5	6	7	20	28	21
MSV Duisburg	18	4	7	7	20	29	19
VfL Bochum	18	5	4	9	22	33	19
Eintracht	18	4	5	9	21	29	17
Hansa Rostock	18	3	7	8	26	34	16
Nuremberg	18	2	9	7	20	33	15
Mönchengladbach	18	2	4	12	20	44	10

Werder Bremen	2	Hertha Berlin	1
Saturday			
Bayern Munich	3	Wolfsburg	0
Hansa Rostock	1	Bayer Leverkusen	1
Hamburg	2	Nuremberg	0
Schalke 04	1	Mönchengladbach	0
Kaiserslautern	1	TSV 1860 Munich	1
Eintracht Frankfurt	0	MSV Duisburg	0
Friday			
Freiburg	1	VfL Bochum	1
B Dortmund	3	VfB Stuttgart	0

HOLLAND

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Feyenoord	18	13	4	1	42	15	43
Vitesse Arnhem	19	11	4	4	38	23	37
Ajax	19	9	7	3	36	16	34
Heerenveen	18	9	6	3	28	19	33
Roda Kerkrade	18	9	4	5	30	22	31
PSV Eindhoven	19	8	7	4	45	34	31
Enschede	19	8	6	5	29	24	30
AZ Alkmaar	19	6	10	3	28	28	28
NEC Nijmegen	19	7	6	6	28	27	27
Utrecht	19	7	4	8	35	35	25
Willem II Tilburg	19	7	4	8	31	35	25
Leeuwarden	19	5	6	8	22	34	21
MVV Maastricht	19	5	5	9	23	32	20
Doetinchem	19	3	9	7	19	30	18
Fortuna Sittard	19	4	5	10	22	35	17
S Rotterdam	19	4	3	12	22	39	15
NAC Breda	18	3	4	11	22	32	13
RKC Waalwijk	19	2	4	13	21	41	10

RKC Waalwijk	2	NAC Breda	1
Utrecht	4	Sparta Rotterdam	1
Feyenoord	1	Ajax Amsterdam	1
NEC Nijmegen	0	Fortuna Sittard	3
Saturday			
Twente Enschede	0	Vitesse Arnhem	0
PSV Eindhoven	1	Willem II Tilburg	0
Doetinchem	1	AZ Alkmaar	1
Friday			
Heerenveen	1	MVV Maastricht	1

FRANCE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Marseille	20	14	5	1	37	13	47
Bordeaux	20	14	2	4	43	17	44
Lyon	20	8	8	4	28	19	32
Rennes	20	9	5	6	25	24	32
Nantes	20	8	7	5	27	22	31
Bastia	20	9	2	9	25	24	29
Monaco	19	8	4	7	27	19	28
Lens	20	8	4	8	28	25	28
Montpellier	20	8	3	9	37	34	27
Auxerre	20	7	6	7	24	25	27
Paris SG	20	6	7	7	18	17	25
Strasbourg	20	5	9	6	17	21	24
Metz	20	5	7	8	18	28	22
Nancy	20	5	6	9	18	26	21
Lorient	20	4	7	9	17	27	19
Le Havre	20	4	6	10	14	26	18
Sochaux	19	3	7	9	16	34	16
Toulouse	20	2	9	9	14	31	15

Saturday			
Marseille	2	Le Havre	0
Bordeaux	6	Metz	0
Strasbourg	1	Rennes	1
Sochaux	1	Nantes	1
Monaco	0	Lyon	1
Bastia	2	Auxerre	0
Lorient	2	Paris St Germain	0
Nancy	0	Lens	1
Toulouse	2	Montpellier	5

BELGIAN LEAGUE: Germinal Ekeren 2 Club Bruges 0; Harelbeke 1 Charleroi 1; Eendracht Aalst 1 Standard Liege 0. **Saturday:** Ostend 2 Ghent 2; Anderlecht 3 Beveren 1; Lommel 2 Excelsior Mouscron 3; Lokeren 2 Kortrijk 1; Sint-Truiden 0 Westerlo 0. **Friday:** Lierse 1 Genk 1. **Leading standings:** 1 Club Bruges P19 Pts40; 2 Genk 19–38; 3 Lokeren 19–34.
PORTUGUESE LEAGUE: Salgueiros 5 Rio Ave 1; Alverca 3 Maritimo 0; Uniao Leiria 1 Beira Mar 0; Vitoria Setubal 1 Chaves 0; Benfica 3 Academica 0. **Saturday:** Campomaiorense 1 Vitoria Guimaraes 0; Porto 3 Sporting Lisbon 2. **Friday:** Boavista 3 Farense 0. **Leading standings:** 1 Porto P16 Pts38; 2 Boavista 16–35; 3 Sporting Lisbon 16–32.

Nationwide review

Blake's heaven puts the thunder of Keane in shade

EVEN the Wolves manager Colin Lee agreed that his teenage prodigy Robbie Keane had been overshadowed for once in the 2–1 defeat at Bradford.

The player who stole Keane's thunder was another Robbie, City's Robbie Blake, who scored the opening goal and then set up Lee Mills to clinch his team's sixth home win in seven.

Although Keane grabbed a consolation goal for Wolves, Lee was left singing the praises of Blake — a modest £200,000 signing from Darlington.

"I thought the boy Blake was the outstanding player out there. If we had had him in our team, it would have been a different result," said Lee.

The Bradford manager Paul Jewell concurred about his 22-year-old striker: "He has such good technique he is difficult to mark."

Barnsley are looking forward to the arrival of the former Wolves striker Don Goodman at Oakwell today.

Goodman, of the Japanese J League side Hiroshima, is starting a loan spell with Barnsley, whose 3–1 home defeat against Swindon saw them slip into the bottom half of the table.

Their manager John Hendrie confirmed: "Don flies in from Japan and will be with us for three months during their winter break."

Iffy Onoura was on target twice for Swindon, whose delighted manager Jimmy Quinn beamed: "I just couldn't believe it at half-time when we were 3–0 up."

The Grimsby captain Paul Groves scored a late winner to sink Watford 2–1, while the Tranmere manager John Aldridge put an unexpected 2–0 win at West Brom down to an attacking line-up. "It surprises teams," he said.



Armed conflict . . . Marsh of Birmingham City holds off Sunderland's Quinn in the First Division's only 0–0 draw

Second Division

CHRIS COLEMAN gave Mohamed Al Fayed a Christmas bonus when his goal took Fulham to the top of the table after their seventh away win of the season.

Kevin Keegan has spent £11 million of the Fulham chairman's money and the two most expensive players in the division combined for the 86th-minute goal which beat Preston.

Barry Hayles, a £2 million buy from Bristol Rovers, crossed for Coleman, £2.1 million from Blackburn, to head in at the far post.

"I have terrific strength in depth here," Keegan said. "I have a squad of 28 who could all perform in the First Division. Mr Al Fayed gave me a budget which I have stuck to, but if anyone becomes available this club is in the fortunate position of being able to look at the situation again."

Fulham have won eight of their last 10 league games, while Preston remain in fourth spot.

Gillingham maintained the pressure on the leaders as Carl Asaba scored a hat-trick in their 4–0 win over Notts County, while Millwall leapfrogged Luton with a 2–1 victory at Kenilworth Road. The Luton defender Steve Davis scored his 10th of the season, but goals from Neil Harris and Lucas Neill secured the points for the Lions.

Jermaine McSporran scored twice as Wycombe beat Lincoln 4–1 at Adams Park to leave the Imps rooted to the bottom of the table. Steve Brown and Dave Carroll also scored, while Gavin Gordon got a consolation for the visitors.

Bournemouth maintained their play-off position with a 1–0 win at Wrexham, while Manchester City slipped to 12th after a 2–1 defeat at York.

Third Division

NIGEL PEARSON'S first match as Carlisle's director of coaching ended with a 2–0 defeat at Plymouth, but not before a floodlight failure delayed the second half by 30 minutes. Every other match had finished by the time Sean McCarthy scored the second goal to secure the points for Plymouth.

Carlisle stay third from bottom after both teams below them lost. Hull's woes continued with Swansea inflicting their eighth home defeat of the season, Richard Appleby and Steve Watkin scoring within five first-half minutes to secure a 2–0 victory.

Scarborough's defeat came at Peterborough, where David Farrell scored his club's first, in the 18th minute, and then got sent off at the beginning of the second half for a second bookable offence. By then the home side were two goals to the good and although Thomas Dabelsteen gave some hope to Scarborough with a 65th-minute goal, the match was over four minutes later, by which time Jason Lydiate had been sent off for the visitors and Leon McKenzie had restored Posh's two-goal lead.

Leyton Orient conceded two goals in the last five minutes at Barnet to turn a potential win into defeat. Goals from Amara Simba and Matthew Beall had cancelled out Paul Wilson's first-half penalty for Barnet, but Mike Basham and Ken Charlery won the day for the Bees with their late strikes.

Almost a third of Saturday's goals were scored in the last 10 minutes of games, none coming later than Steve Howard's injury-time strike for Hartlepool, at home to Southend.

Gustavo di Lella had given the home side the perfect start with a fifth-minute strike, but sandwiched between Hartlepool's pair were four away goals which sent the majority of the tiny crowd — the smallest in the league — home unhappy.

Football

Premiership: Chelsea 2 Tottenham Hotspur 0

Age does not weary Vialli as Blues go top

David Lacey



THE last player-manager to win a championship at Chelsea was Kenny Dalglish, who scored the goal which in 1986 secured the first half of Liverpool's Double.

On Saturday Gianluca Vialli, who would be the first of the breed to win the title *for* Chelsea, was asked how it felt to be top and replied that it was better than being bottom.

Not only does Vialli share Dalglish's penchant for lightning repartee he exudes more charm than the great communicator and speaks more intelligible English. But whether Chelsea become champions for only the second time will depend to some extent on how active a role on the field Vialli intends taking in the latter half of the season.

"I'm getting too old for this," he remarked after recalling himself to the attack for the 2-0 victory over Tottenham at Stamford Bridge on Saturday which took Chelsea to the top of the table for the first time since Armistice Day in 1989, when the First Division was still three years away from becoming the Premier League. Yet at 34 Vialli is a year younger than Dalglish was when he led Liverpool to the title on the same ground.

Age is clearly not going to be a problem for the Italian but on Saturday's evidence he needs regular matches if he is to lead by example as the championship approaches its climax. It was only Vialli's third Premiership appearance of the season (although he has played in five Cup Winners' and Worthington Cup games) and at times it showed.

Some of the touches were masterful, most noticeably when Vialli came deep to win possession and instigate movements with quick, accurate passes to the wings. But when extra pace was needed to shake off defenders or stay onside he looked sluggish, hence the murmurs of disapproval from Chelsea supporters when Gianfranco Zola, rather than Vialli, was ordered to make way for Tore Andre Flo 20 minutes from the end.

In fact the change was borne out by events, since Vialli set up Gustavo Poyet for the first of Chelsea's two late goals while Flo headed in the second, but as the season progresses the player-manager will surely find it more difficult to pick himself on an occasional basis. Dalglish, incidentally, appeared in nine of Liverpool's last 11 games in 1986.

Clearly the loss of the injured Pierluigi Casiraghi has persuaded Vialli that he needs to make a bigger contribution on the playing side than was his intention at the start of the season. So long as Flo remains content with walk-on parts all well and good, but apart from injuries there ought not to be many reasons why Zola, given his present form, fails to stay on for 90 minutes.

Vialli quoted an exhausting match at Old Trafford three nights earlier as the reason for Zola's premature departure on Saturday.

But up to that point the urchin's touches had been the saving grace of another of those scruffy London scuffles in which space is at a premium and the ball suffers from claustrophobia. His skills were like finding gold coins in a ploughed field, although Poyet's cool creative influence again caught the eye.

For the time being the rustic approach suits Tottenham and under George Graham they are still enjoying the novelty of hard work. Until Chelsea's superior passing began to assert itself towards half-time Spurs' willingness to challenge for everything and track down opponents in possession promised them the point which was always going to be their most realistic aim.

When Vialli, sent clear and onside by Zola in the 58th minute, wafted a rare chance over the crossbar the plot appeared to be working in Tottenham's favour. But within three minutes they had been reduced to 10 players by the dismissal of Chris Armstrong and thereafter the whole picture changed.

Graham does not have much luck with Graham Poll, the referee who a year earlier had sent off two of his Leeds team at Chelsea. By Poll's own strict standards he showed unaccustomed leniency towards some of Saturday's confrontations, but Armstrong should still have known better than to clip the heels of Albert Ferrer having previously been cautioned for tossing the ball away at a free-kick.

The Spurs manager could hardly complain about the sending-off since only a week earlier the dismissal of Manchester United's Gary Neville for two bookable offences had helped his team come from 2-0 down to force a draw at White Hart Lane. So Graham contented himself with the rider that "what we don't need is opposing players running 25 yards to remonstrate with the referee when he's already made up his mind".

Presumably Graham was referring to Frank Leboeuf, who led the Chelsea delegation. It's funny but George bears a remarkable resemblance to the former manager of another north London club whose players wore red and from time to time would pursue referees with the single-minded determination of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

While Graham's earlier observation about the difficulty of scoring against 10 men still held good, Chelsea's passing game will always be hard to withstand once a side is a player short. Poyet's goal, a gentle ricochet off a post, punished Spurs for allowing Celestine Babayaro's centre to reach Vialli and Flo's header rewarded Dan Petrescu's determination in keeping the ball in play before centring.

Chelsea have now won or saved at least six league matches with goals scored in the last 10 minutes. A similarly strong finish to the season and the title may yet be theirs.



Flying high . . . the Chelsea player-manager takes a tumble under pressure from Tottenham's Steve Carr as his team gets the better of a scrappy derby PHOTOGRAPH: TOM JENKINS

First Division
Nov 11, 1989

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Chelsea	13	7	4	2	20	10	25
Arsenal	13	7	3	3	23	15	24
Liverpool	12	6	3	3	25	12	21
Norwich City	13	5	6	2	21	18	21
Aston Villa	13	6	3	4	19	14	21
Everton	13	6	2	5	20	20	20
Coventry City	13	6	2	5	11	15	20
Southampton	13	5	4	4	23	20	19
Tottenham	13	5	3	5	19	19	18
Luton Town	13	4	5	4	13	11	17
Manchester Utd	12	5	2	5	20	19	17
Nottm Forest	13	4	4	5	16	14	16
Derby County	13	4	3	6	15	12	15
Wimbledon	13	3	6	4	11	14	15
Millwall	13	4	3	6	20	25	15
Crystal Palace	13	4	3	6	14	27	15
QPR	13	3	5	5	14	16	14
Manchester City	13	4	2	7	17	24	14
Charlton Ath	13	3	4	6	11	15	13
Sheff Wed	13	3	3	7	6	20	12

Nottingham Forest 2 Blackburn Rovers 2

Blake bags brace as he tries to avoid hat-trick

Adam Sills

WHEN it comes to relegation matters, Nathan Blake and Dave Bassett go back a long way. The two experienced the drop when Blake's Bassett-managed Sheffield United side fell out of the Premiership in 1994.

The Blackburn striker's brace on Saturday did his old friend no favours as Rovers dumped Forest on the bottom of the Premiership for the first time this season. Bassett will need all his know-how to resolve his latest crisis.

"Not a lot of people come back from that experience," Blake said about that first taste of relegation. The Welsh international did, though, with Bolton, only to suffer the bitter pain of the drop once again on the final day of last season. Rovers paid £4 million for him in October and Blake does not want to complete an unsavoury hat-trick.

"I haven't had any thoughts about relegation this season," he said, having secured a point for Rovers which still leaves them languishing in the bottom three. "We can get out of this. We are just thinking about picking up as many points as possible."

Saturday's reward was fully deserved for the endeavour Blackburn showed in clawing back a 2-0 deficit. The manager Brian Kidd has a three-game unbeaten run under his belt and the only way for Rovers, surely, is up.

Kidd resembled a jack-in-the-box with his leaps from the bench to feverishly gesture and bellow orders from the touchline. The other Jack, the owner and benefactor Jack Walker, will happily reward his manager's enthusiasm with an open chequebook.

Rovers have been linked with the Coventry defender Gary Breen and Leicester's midfielder Neil Lennon. If Ashley Ward arrives from Barnsley the cut-price departure of Kevin Davies could follow, though Kidd knows he will not be forced to sell and has access to Walker's crisp notes when he wants them.

"If players are available that can strengthen the squad and give us an extra option, I am sure Mr Walker will listen sympathetically to me," Kidd said after seeing Keith Gillespie and Brian McClair make their respective debuts on pitch and bench.

Gillespie's introduction was overshadowed by the referee Stephen Lodge who did his best to upset the game and the Rovers bench with a kamikaze approach to whistle-blowing. His generous view of a challenge by Jesper Mattsson on Blake which should have seen the Swede uprooted from the pitch, came soon after Dougie Freedman had doubled Forest's first-half advantage.

He added a tap-in to Steve Chettle's hotly disputed penalty and should have made it 3-0 immediately after the interval when he shot wide with only John Filan in the Blackburn goal to beat.

Blake took advantage and his double left Forest without a win in 15 league games since August and left Bassett with that sinking feeling once again.

West Ham United 2 Everton 1

West Ham refuse to offer any gifts

Russell Thomas

RIO FERDINAND will not be an expensive Christmas present to Liverpool, Manchester United or any other rich suitor. But next year who knows, even if it is an equal certainty West Ham's prodigious defender will not be leaving in any bargain-basement sales.

If Harry Redknapp had his way, Ferdinand would never leave Upton Park. But Redknapp, like so many other managers in these financially driven days, does not always have his way. So the manager can do little but the next best thing; talk up the price even without mentioning any figures.

Redknapp conceded after his slightly fortunate win over Everton that his central-defender's departure was almost inevitable. His eulogy to the 20-year-old player which preceded this admission was unquestionably sincere. And, if interpreted as a sales pitch, it was mightily impressive.

Asked whether a club like West Ham can keep hold of such a talent, Redknapp answered: "Nowadays, it is not realistic to think so. It's very difficult. All we can do at West Ham is to show him that we are ambitious as well."

In that case, Redknapp will have readily noted Ferdinand's comment early in the day that the club "is on the verge of big things". The biggest thing that Ferdinand can probably enjoy this season is an FA Cup winners's medal and a place in a revamped Uefa Cup next year. That would provide a European stage for what Redknapp, in short, calls "a frightening talent".

West Ham are again bubbling nicely, but Redknapp believes it will be difficult to break into England's strongest four.

Everton's manager Walter Smith strayed on the generous side, having "no excuses about the result even if we had a few players missing". In addition to injuries and suspensions, flu deprived him of Ibrahima Bakayoko and, until the last 16 minutes, John Collins. The freak of Marc Keller's mishit cross and a fortuitous, if brave, bouncing header by Trevor Sinclair prevented Everton continuing their mini-revival.

In a game that raised further questions about the efficiency of Premiership defences, even Ferdinand's extensive attributes could not prevent a deserved goal for Danny Cadamarteri and equally the towering Marco Materazzi, almost contemptuous in his control of John Hartson and Ian Wright, could not plug every gap in Everton's defence.

● Ian Kilbride, a Cape Town investment banker, and his English-based father Bill could be planning to bid for Peter Johnson's controlling stake in Everton, the Sunday Independent of Johannesburg reported. "We have been involved with Everton for a long time as a family," Kilbride said.

Coventry City 1 Derby County 1

Smith's subs bear fruit

Peter White

JIM SMITH is affectionately known as the Bald Eagle, but what he may lack in hair on his head, he more than makes up for with his wealth of knowledge inside it.

Perhaps Smith, the Derby manager, could be forgiven if one day he opts to conduct matters wearing a wig and gown, for when he is in a spot of bother he invariably turns to the bench for a positive verdict.

The substitutes' bench again proved his salvation at Highfield Road, when two half-time changes played a significant part in Derby clawing their way back to earn a draw.

Lee Carsley, one of those introduced at the interval, needed only five minutes to cancel out Coventry's lead, which had been acquired early in the game courtesy of Noel Whelan's close-range strike.

After the game, Smith left his young assistant Steve McLaren to explain the transformation in Derby's fortunes after they had been outplayed for most of the opening period.

McLaren said: "There is no substitute for the experience Jim has picked up over the years. I am 37, and still learning. I do not believe I could yet go into a club as manager as do the things he does, like make astute changes while a game is in progress."

Smith's half-time changes — Carsley for Dean Sturridge and Steve Elliott for Kevin Harper — might have been in vain if Coventry had converted their overall superiority in the opening 45 minutes into more goal-scoring opportunities. But the home side were not helped by a string of inconsistencies by the Sheffield referee Uriah Rennie.

Three penalty appeals which on another day might have been upheld were all firmly rejected by Rennie, who also annoyed both teams with his erratic interpretation of yellow-card offences.

Strachan and his troops had every right to feel aggrieved shortly after Carsley's equaliser when the Derby defender Elliott's penalty-area challenge on Darren Huckerby should have sent the striker sprawling. Credit to Huckerby who some how managed to keep his feet.

Rennie appeared in the act of pointing to the penalty spot, but having seen the players' recovery, he changed his mind and allowed play to continue. Huckerby indeed paid the penalty for his honesty, and with that went the chance of Coventry securing a much-needed victory.

Southampton 3 Wimbledon 1

Unkind cut poops Le Tissier party

Pat Symes

MATTHEW Le Tissier inspired Southampton's climb off the foot of the Premiership, but his relief was short-lived after he was hit with a glass in a nightclub on Saturday night.

The 30-year-old was left with a head wound after trouble flared in Chicago Rock in Southampton where Le Tissier was celebrating the 3-1 victory over Wimbledon.

Le Tissier, the joint owner of the Celebration Plaza nightclub, has made a complaint to police.

Earlier in the day Southampton had been fighting for their lives. Joe Kinnear had warned his Wimbledon players that the Saints would be more dangerous than Liverpool last Sunday, but his words were lost in a performance of uncharacteristic lethargy.

Kinnear was at a loss to explain why his players had failed to counter Southampton's direct attacking approach which would have done credit to the Dons' philosophy of old as they claimed only their third win of the season.

Southampton's first goal was straight out of the Wimbledon manual: a long kick by the goalkeeper, flicked on by a giant forward, James Beattie, and finished at pace by Egil Ostenstad.

The Southampton manager Dave Jones said: "We outdid Wimbledon in the Wimbledon way. In our position it doesn't matter how we get the goals."

Southampton's three took their total for the season to a paltry 15 in 18 matches but if Neil Sullivan was Wimbledon's man of the match for a succession of excellent saves — Southampton also hit the woodwork three times — Beattie's old-style aggression was a key factor in the win.

Eyebrows were raised when Jones paid Blackburn £1 million for the striker as a by-product of the Kevin Davies transfer. It was easy on Saturday to see the attraction.

Beattie is only 20 and has scored one goal in his short career but he may yet provide an answer to the shortage which is threatening to end Southampton's 20-year tenure in the top flight. Jones said he had looked at 15 strikers beneath and beyond the Premiership without finding a credible or affordable answer.

Ostenstad and the Moroccan midfielder Hassan Kachloul scored Southampton's other goals and Marcus Gayle's late goal for Wimbledon was very much a consolation effort.

Match stats

	Sou	Wim
Possession	51%	49%
Attempts on target	13	2
Attempts off target	5	5
Corners	7	7
Fouls	12	17
Offsides	0	6
Bookings	1	2



Aerial power . . . Carlton Palmer outjumps Neal Ardley of Wimbledon during Southampton's important win

Platt shows his drawing power against Milan

DAVID PLATT had Ariel Ortega to thank as his career in charge of Sampdoria started with a 2-2 draw against Milan in Italy's Serie A, where Platt spent four seasons as a player.

The Argentinian struck a late free-kick to equalise Oliver Bierhoff's 80th-minute header which had threatened to spoil Platt's return to the Stadio Luigi Ferraris.

Platt was given a rousing reception by the home fans but was forced to watch from the stand and keep in radio contact with his No. 2 Giorgio Veneri as he is still awaiting a full Italian coaching licence. He saw his team fall a goal behind when Leonardo scored after a mix-up in the Sampdoria defence. Francesco Palmieri levelled the score-after 53 minutes.

"We had prepared this match so well that there was little to say about it," Veneri said. "I only spoke to Platt twice."

Milan's Zvonimir Boban was sent off in the final minutes of the game.

Florentina, for whom Gabriel Batistua scored yet again, failed to exploit Milan's slip-up as Japan's Hidetoshi Nakata converted a penalty five minutes into injury-time to help Perugia hold the league leaders to a 2-2 draw.

Filippo Inzaghi scored a hat-trick as Juventus beat Salernitana 3-0, their first league win this month.

هكذا من الأصل

Clogger

A sideways glance at soccer







Their kit don't fit

By John Gregory

Still getting a bit arsey. Englishman-only policy. Springsteen devotion. Has the tatty tracksuit been put into his socks. He's the first track to become the Richard Branson of British football.

The Off The Christmas Card List XI

They've had run-ins galore this season.

Gladiator Hall	Politely furious with Mr Barber at Old Trafford
Alex Ferguson	Speechless with Mr Pepsi at Whitefoot Lane
Gordon Strachan	Blew his top with Mr Dean at Selhurst Park
David Jones	Severely bobbled trolley by Mr Lodge v Derby
Arsène Wenger	Studiously engaged with Mr Rasiq Lane
Roy Hodgson	Apoplectic with Mr Jones v Chelsea
Dave Bassett	Obviously upset with Mr Lodge at Tottenham
Joe Kinnear	Scathing about linesman Mr Bellamy Ewd
Bryan Robson	Incandescent with Mr Abbott at The Dell
Ray Evans	Infuriated with Mr Lodge (again) v Man Utd
Leeds Lawrence	Stinging towards Mr Lomas at Sunderland

A life in pictures

Sir John Hall



Work Canny shopping centre magnate



Business Dead canny football investor



Play Man management — canny as you like



Home Rolling out of a canny Geordie nation

Ask the experts



Has any club been top of a division at Christmas and still been relegated, or vice-versa? The most spectacular fall from grace I recall is as follows: Millwall visited Roker Park in December 1995 leading the First Division. Sunderland were flying high and we all anticipated a competitive top of the table clash. [illegible] 5-0 (Craig Russell, left, scoring four). Sunderland finished in a long unbeaten run and eventually won the First Division championship, Millwall went into a severe downturn, were relegated and have yet to recover.
Rob Sim, Aberdeen

State of the nation

Nigeria

Population 130 million
Unlikely cup winners Abiola Babes (1986 and 1987). More recently any club sharing its name with the former opposition leader Moshood Abiola would be lucky to reach the pitch, let alone the cup final.
National player stereotype Big and strong, or small and clever. Prone to extravagance and indiscipline.
Pioneer Strictly speaking, Reuben Agboola was the first Nigerian to play in England, but he was born in London. Daniel Amokachi (below), signed by Everton after the 1994 World Cup, blazed an uncertain trail. But two things about England impressed the chunky raider: Liverpudlians ("I love the people on Merseyside"); and Duncan Ferguson ("the big man is my pal").
Important import Chelsea's Celestine Babayaro looks to set to establish himself, as long as his goal celebration routines (or even assist celebration routines) don't get out of hand.
Stranger in a strange land Birmingham's Dele Adebola ("Bamberdele to give him his full title), qualified for all the home countries, seemed set to link up with Northern Ireland this year. "It looks harder for me to get into the Nigerian team than to play for England," Adebola said. "I would be mad to turn down Northern Ireland." Well, maybe.
Jilted Don The former QPR defender Don Shanks worked as a scout and coach in Nigeria, but claimed most English managers were "doughnuts" for not looking at African players. His own intelligence about the country was oddly lacking on one occasion, however. "It was only when I arrived in Lagos that I realised there had been a military coup" he said.
World Cup middlebloke who would join Tuesday Weld in an Interpersonal Celebrity Dogs of The Week XI Sunday Citizen.

A-Z of British football

S

... is for Schoolboys, similarly pilloried every time Liverpool play. Classic usage: "The goals given away were silly, SCHOOLBOY errors." Gérard Houllier (and 30 million others) after the first leg of their UEFA Cup third round tie with Celta Vigo.

Cup of winners



A straightforward question for the penultimate week of our Cup Whispers' Cup competition. What do Manchester United have to do with the above photo? Post, fax or e-mail your answer to the address below to win your choice of this month's new titles from the Football Book Club (0171-583 1605 for a catalogue). Please include a phone number.
Last week's answer: Finland's Reipas Lahti and Ararat Yerevan of (Soviet) Armenia. Winner Jonathan Fenster of Harrow, Middlesex.

Clogger welcomes contributions. Write to the Guardian, 119 Farringdon Road, London EC1R 3ER. You can e-mail us at clogger@guardian.co.uk or fax us on 0171-713 4107

Referwatch

Graham Poll



Home town Tring.
Home town's other claim to fame Former home to the Rothschilds; highest point of the Grand Union canal; startling pavement maze in the shape of a zebra in the town centre.
Occupation Field sales manager in fragrance and cosmetics.
Hobbies "Family and training" (though not necessarily in that order).
Trademark gesture Treats running backwards as a positive pleasure rather than a necessary evil.
Today's highlight Wringing from George Graham an admission that he got a red card decision right.
Handshake cards in the manner of ... A fragrance salesman about to test an item from the deodorant range.

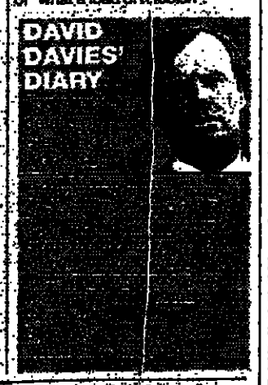
The gaffer tapes

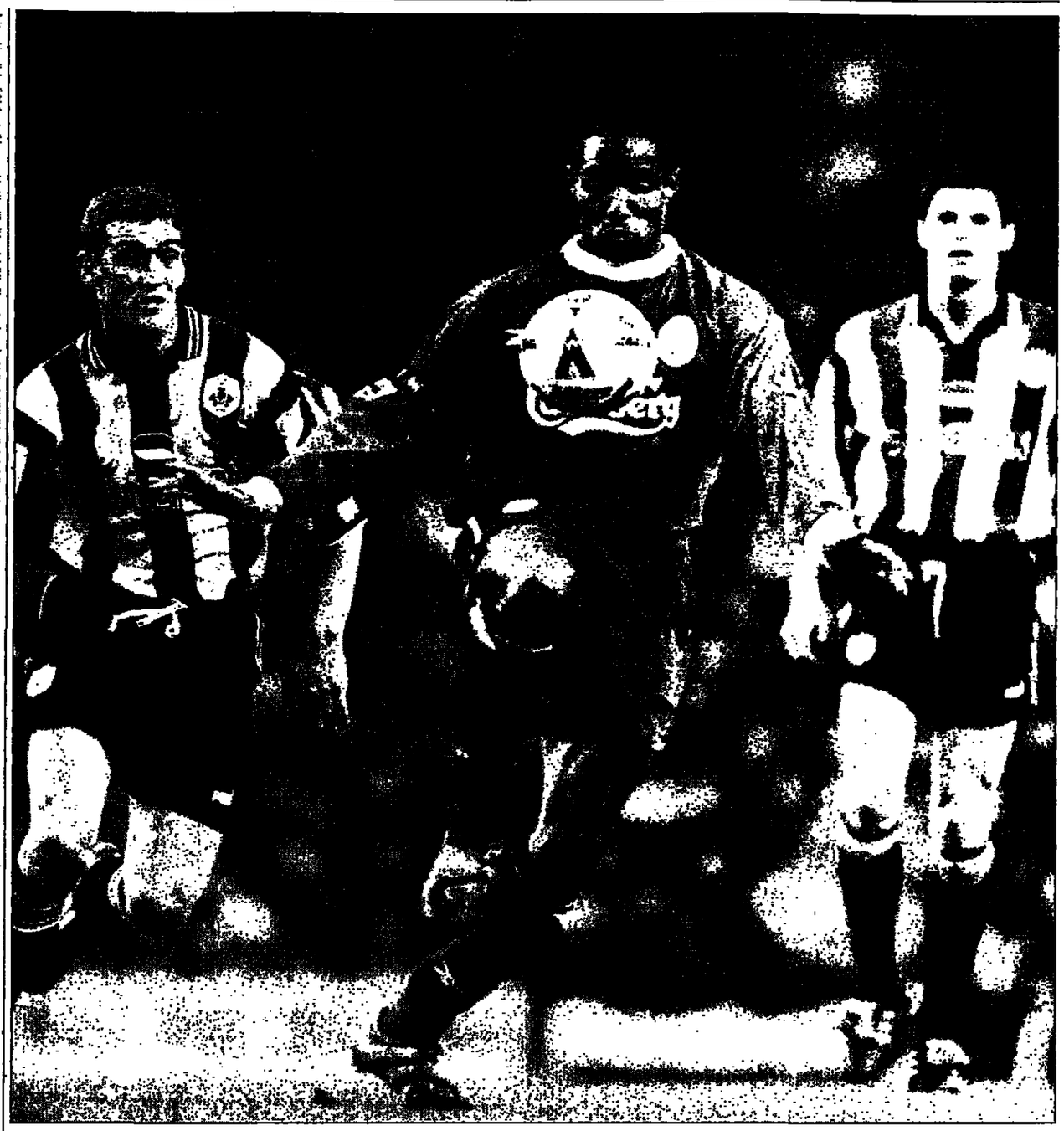
"I am getting fed up with myself."
Gordon Strachan sees into another trade against the standard of refereeing after another frustrating afternoon at Highfield Road.

"We just got outplayed to be honest. Southampton were far the better side."
Wimbledon boss **Joe Kinnear** with words that haven't been spoken for a long, long time.

"My lads seem to find it hard playing in front of the home fans."
West Brom's **Denis Smith** after his players walked off to chants of "what a load of rubbish".

David Davies' Diary





Controlling force . . . Liverpool's captain Paul Ince juggles the ball while Wednesday's Andy Booth gives chase PHOTOGRAPH: CLIVE BRUNSKILL

Premiership: Liverpool 2 Sheffield Wednesday 0

Liverpool labour the point despite best efforts of Berger and Owen

Ian Ross sees Houllier's less-than-perfect team emerge from their worst patch of form in 40 years with a home victory

WHEN a team are one defeat away from alienating their most blinkered loyalists all they can ask for is a level playing field, a fair wind and, most crucially, accommodating opponents.

While it would be stretching a point to suggest that Sheffield Wednesday had begun to unfurl the white flag before their arrival at Anfield, only fleetingly did they toy with the idea of deepening Liverpool's mid-season crisis. It was an opportunity callously missed.

With their hosts marooned in their worst patch of form for more than four decades the assumption was that Wednesday would give it a real go at the very least, if only because the events of the last few months have conspired to prove that Liverpool are vulnerable when standing toe-to-toe with players of enthusiasm.

Sadly, too much was expected of the South Yorkshire club for it was only after they had shipped the two goals which always seemed likely to decide the outcome that they shaped as if to confirm their own emergence from the Premiership's trauma ward.

"They got their goals at a point when I thought we had weathered the storm," said Wednesday's manager Danny Wilson. "We really needed to score a goal during the period when we had most of the possession, but it just wouldn't come."

Actually it would not have come had the game been extended until Boxing Day for despite the tireless running and sublime touches of Benito Carbone, Wednesday's attempts to rip a hole in Liverpool's tissue-paper defence fell only fractionally short of being embarrassing.

"I am particularly happy with the second half because we managed to keep a clean sheet and that doesn't happen very often these days," said Liverpool's manager Gérard Houllier with the look of a man who had just taken the first faltering step on a journey that threatens to be an extremely long one.

The accusation that Houllier's players neither care nor try is palpably false for their work-rate was again beyond reproach. But this Liverpool team are ordinary, decidedly so, and it will take a combination of firm leadership and huge bundles of cash if the slackers and mercenaries are to be flushed out and replaced not simply by better players, but by better players who can boast much more laudable ideals.

"We are not perfect; we know that," said Houllier. Houllier's main problem is the transparently imperfect form of Robbie Fowler whose recovery from a career-threatening knee injury has now slowed to a crawl.

The only way to restore the young England forward to full match fitness is to play him, of course, but he is so lacking in every department right now that it really is proving to be a painful exercise.

Match stats

	Liv	Wed
Possession	53%	47%
Attempts on target	7	0
Attempts off target	12	6
Corners	4	2
Fouls	10	10
Offsides	1	6
Bookings	2	1

The solution to the problem is likely to come in the form of the aforementioned firm leadership for if Fowler should display McManamanesque reluctance to accept the offer of a new contract, Houllier will probably seek to sell him before the season is over.

While he never looked like scoring Fowler did actually have a foot in both of Liverpool's goals, steering into the path of Parick Berger after 19 minutes and then beginning the move which ended with Michael Owen's close-range drive 15 minutes later.

It was not until after the interval that Liverpool came to appreciate that the game was still theirs to throw away.

By way of laborious midfield movement and a series of reckless clearances they applied themselves diligently to the task of dismantling what it was they had built in the first half.

True to form they tried to toss it all away, but this time it was beyond them.

Wiseman on way out, claims Kelly

GRAHAM KELLY believes Keith Wiseman's days as the Football Association chairman are numbered.

Kelly resigned as the FA's chief executive last week after the executive committee criticised the pair's decision to grant the FA of Wales £3.2 million in return for their support in Wiseman's attempt to become Britain's Fifa vice-president.

Wiseman refused to go, even though the executive committee passed a unanimous vote of no confidence in him because of the cash-for-votes affair. Wiseman claims it is up to the full FA council to decide his fate when it meets on January 4.

Kelly does not think Wiseman will survive, even though he is adamant they were both acting in the best interests of the FA and the campaign to stage the 2006 World Cup.

"His prospects are being painted fairly bleakly, but then they would be because the climate at the moment is, let's move on quickly and put all this unpleasantness behind us," Kelly told BBC Radio 5 Live yesterday. "If the council takes that line and back the executive committee, then Keith has very little chance of staying on as chairman."

Kelly was also adamant that the grant did not constitute a bribe. "A bribe to me is somebody slipping something into somebody's back pocket and then they go away and stash it in the Bahamas," he said.

Wiseman echoed that view, saying: "I don't see it as remotely being a bribe — a bribe to me is where a payment is made for personal gain, not where it funds boys at school playing football."

He claimed leading figures in the game had wanted Kelly out. "Several people had been after Graham for some time. I'm not going to name names but various individuals- . . . wanted someone in place prepared to act as they wanted."

As for himself, Wiseman insists he has done nothing wrong and is determined to clear his name. He said: "I was acting in the FA's best interests and following accepted business practice . . . the process followed to remove me was unconstitutional. The full FA council is the only body that has the right to remove the chairman."

Newcastle United 1 Leicester 0

Hero of the hour Barton does a mighty fine job

Michael Walker on why the full-back home fans jeer is tolerated by Ruud Gullit

THE Manic Street Preachers played in Newcastle last week and during a comically drab afternoon at St James' Park it was hard not to think that the angry Welshmen had composed If You Tolerate This Then Your Children Will Be Next, specifically with this game in mind. This match was so bad Warren Barton was named man of it.

Then again, Warren Dean Barton is a peculiar case. Bought by Kevin Keegan 3½ seasons ago for the still astonishing sum of £4.5 million, Barton has gone from being a coveted Wimbledon right-back to a laughed-at Newcastle left-back. So enthusiastic are the ironic cheers from home fans every time Barton weighs in with even a milligram of skill, it has become embarrassing.

If you tolerate that then you are either very well paid or have no options. Both probably refer to Barton, who has seen Keegan and Kenny Dalglish depart and who is now prospering under Ruud Gullit, to the extent that Gullit said after the game: "Every club needs a Warren Barton."

It would have been difficult for Gullit to keep a straight face while saying something like that, and he didn't. Gullit admitted Barton "has no left foot" but justified his inclusion on that side of the defence because "he holds good positions" and his inclusion in the team because Barton "is important in the locker-room. He is a good character, good for the atmosphere. He does little jobs like making sure everybody pays their fines. He's our Sheriff of Nottingham."

In that case Barton should ensure Andreas Andersson pays heavily. It would be interesting to hear what Andersson's contribution to team morale is. Maybe he brings shampoo and conditioner. He certainly brings nothing to a football pitch, except the expletives that follow him from the terraces. To call Andersson a big girl's blouse would be to invite writs from big girls everywhere — not to mention their blouses.

Alan Shearer, who came on for the last 35 minutes, stares at the Swede as if the two were in a bad marriage. They are. Yet Gullit continues to pick Andersson and could point to him having a foot in Newcastle's goal. This was only partly true. Andersson's intended pass was intercepted and the loose ball was stroked in by Stephen Glass after 66 minutes.

That was enough to beat a hugely disappointing Leicester City. When addressing the press afterwards, Martin O'Neill stared through them as though reporting back from some grisly ambush in a Vietnam jungle. "I am sorry," he said, shell-shocked. "We were poor, we had no energy. Newcastle deserved to win."

O'Neill attributed Leicester's lethargy to Neil Lennon and Muzzy Izzet suffering from flu. Both played, however, a sign of O'Neill's resources. Another flu victim, Duncan Ferguson, did not. But the records will show he was not missed. And the reason? "Warren Barton, centre partin' la la la la la."

In the 8-page sports section



Double delight
Mike Atherton runs up his career best
13



Western worry
Alarm bells ringing as Bath lose again
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Racing, Show-jumping 14
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The Guardian
Sport
Monday December 21 1998 www.football.guardian.co.uk

Grimandi sent off as Leeds are sent packing

Premiership: Arsenal 3 Leeds United 1

Arsenal back with big guns blazing

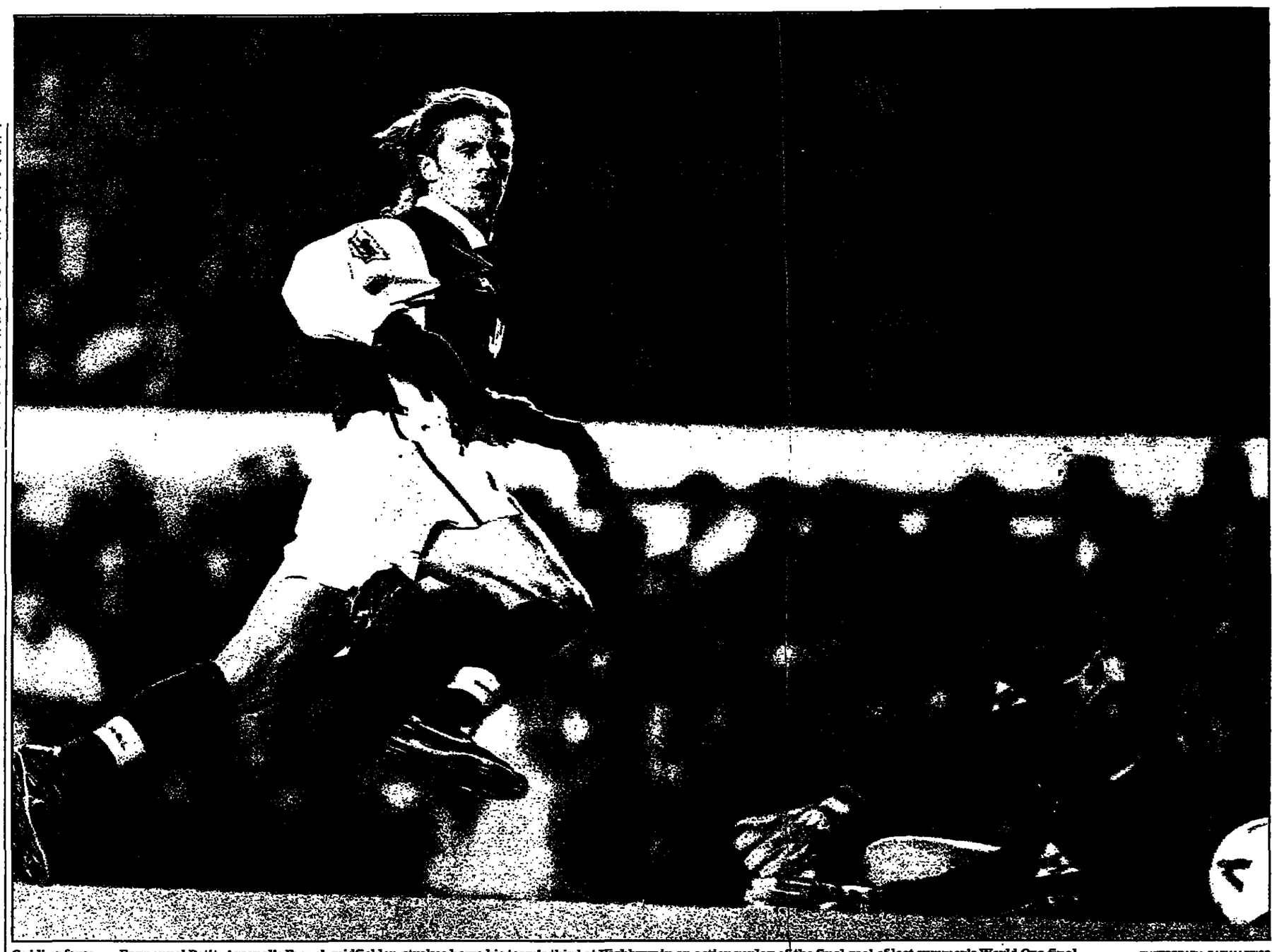
David Lacey sees the champions hold their advantage in a spiteful encounter

BY THE new year Arsenal's latest challenge for the championship may be something more than a muffled boom from distant cannons. Yesterday they were content to rediscover the art of holding leads by beating Leeds in a match not short of flying shrapnel.

Dennis Bergkamp scored one goal and created two others as David O'Leary's first return to Highbury as a manager saw his lively, confident team defeated, Arsenal's first league victory in six games. Had Leeds taken chances at crucial moments, Arsenal, who a week earlier had lost 3–2 at Aston Villa after going 2–0 up, might have had to work even harder for the victory which has brought them to within four points of the leading pair.

Match stats

	Ars	Leeds
Possession	53%	47%
Attempts on target	3	1
Attempts off target	7	11
Corners	5	2
Fouls	13	12
Offsides	2	4
Bookings	2	3
Sendings-off	1	0



Guiding force . . . Emmanuel Petit, Arsenal's French midfielder, strokes home his team's third at Highbury in an action replay of the final goal of last summer's World Cup final PHOTOGRAPH: GARY M PRIOR

Arsenal are scoring goals again, eight of them in three matches if one counts the 3–1 victory over Panathinaikos which added a defiant postscript to their disappointing Champions League campaign. But other, less attractive habits, still dog their football and yesterday Gilles Grimandi became the fifth Arsenal player to be sent off this season.

The French defender, who had only come off the bench in the 72nd minute, was dismissed by Paul Durkin in the 85th for a mild head-butt on Alan Smith, the 18-year-old Leeds striker who had just replaced Danny Granville. Mild or not, a butt is a butt and Grimandi had to go.

The Arsenal manager, Arsène Wenger, claimed Grimandi had been fouled two or three times. "The guy stamped on him," he said. "Grimandi made a head movement towards him but didn't touch him." Nevertheless, television proved contact had been made.

Certainly Smith pushed the Arsenal player to the ground but Grimandi still overreacted and, coming less than a week after Patrick Vieira was fined £20,000 by the Football Association for an obscene gesture to the crowd at Hillsborough, was hardly a masterpiece of timing.

After the final whistle Emmanuel Petit angrily brushed aside proferred handshakes because he felt Lee Bowyer had elbowed him in the face in the closing seconds. "Bowyer is great at upsetting people," said Wenger but added that this was because he was a good player. Last season Petit was sent off for pushing Durkin during a game against Villa.

Controversy aside, the match was fast, open and watchable as the teams vied to see who could produce the quickest and most penetrative counter-attacks. Initially Leeds had the edge for pace but Arsenal won because their final passes were better judged and their finishing was sharper.

His squad weakened by several casualties, including Lucas Radebe and David Batty, O'Leary opted for three centre-backs flanked by Gunnar Halle and Ian Harte, relying on Hopkin, Bowyer and Granville to counter the renewed partnership of Vieira and Petit in Arsenal's midfield. For a time the pattern promised to bear fruit but once Leeds fell behind they found it difficult to get players forward in support of Jimmy Floyd Hasselbaink and Harry Kewell.

All might have been different had Hopkin accepted the simplest of chances midway through the first half. Bowyer having dispossessed Bergkamp, Hopkin started a move which saw Bowyer release Hasselbaink on the left. The Dutchman's cross was low and true but Hopkin, with only Alex Manninger, playing in place of the injured David Seaman, to beat, sidefooted wide from barely three yards.

Shortly before the half-hour Leeds learned the cost of that miss. A lob from Petit was headed forward by Nicolas Anelka and Bergkamp calmly beat Nigel Martyn to score his third goal in two matches.

Leeds were entitled to feel a little hard done by since Anelka had been in an offside position when Petit played the ball and should have been pulled up the moment he came into the movement.

At all events Arsenal were playing the sort of football which won them the Double last season, with Bergkamp in full flow, Marc Overmars showing much of his old sharpness and Petit and Vieira commanding the game from box to box. Ten minutes before half-time Petit darted behind the Leeds defence to meet a Bergkamp chip with a volley that went just wide.

Seven minutes into the second half Bergkamp's precise square pass through a clutch of defenders found Vieira showing a superb touch to gain possession and stride past the last challenge before driving Arsenal further ahead. In the opening minute of the half Bowyer had put a free header wide.

"You've got to take your chances," said O'Leary and in the 66th minute Hasselbaink did so in resounding fashion. Bowyer's cross rebounded off Kewell's heel as he challenged Martin Keown and the power and speed of Hasselbaink's shot inside the right-hand post beat Manninger.

Leeds saw a gleam of hope but Arsenal were creating chances almost at will and with eight minutes left, Nelson Vivas having dispossessed Kewell, Bergkamp's pass sent in Petit for a shot in off a post which recalled his late goal for France in the World Cup final.

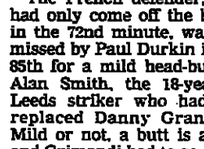
Arsenal might not have beaten Brazil but at least Wenger was persuaded to revise his annual dismissal of their title chances from doubtful to maybe. But his defence is still being exposed. The difference yesterday was that Leeds did not have a Dion Dublin to take advantage.

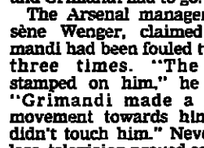
Martin Thorpe sees a buoyant Middlesbrough confirm their recent revival and add to Alex Ferguson's woes with a 3–2 win at Old Trafford

Robson offers United a window to the future

Half measures

How the United and Middlesbrough centre-halves compare





	Neville	Pallister
Defending		
Tackles attempted	1	2
Success rate	100%	100%
Clearances, blocks	2	14
Passing		
Passes attempted	68	24
Success rate	96%	96%
Goal attempts	0	0
On target	0	0
Off target	0	0
Discipline		
Fouls committed	1	1
Cards (yellow - red)	0-0	0-0

A FEW weeks ago Manchester United fans were worrying that the club would rue the day they released the man regarded as Alex Ferguson's natural successor.

On Saturday, with Brian Kidd at Blackburn and Ferguson absent because of a family bereavement, supporters and directors alike were offered a timely glimpse of what the future might look like without the men behind the club's colossal successes. As United went 3–0 down at home after 59 minutes, it was a chilling vision.

However, Middlesbrough's first win at Old Trafford since 1930 also offered an alternative glimpse of a post-Ferguson United. So impressive are Boro now that it becomes easier by the day to see Bryan Robson returning to manage the club he served with injury-prone distinction for 13 years.

Eleven Premiership games unbeaten have lifted Boro to fourth. United, meanwhile, have won only one of their last nine Premiership games, last kept a clean sheet on November 8 and have conceded 23 goals — compared to 27 in all league games last season.

Statistics like these point to one area, and sure enough collective defensive failings once again cost United the chance to go top of the table. Jaap Stam was missing injured, but even with him the fundamental problem remains.

The rock-solid years of telepathic understanding between Steve Bruce and Gary Pallister have been replaced by the suicidal uncertainty of a fluctuating central defensive partnership comprising Stam and A N Other. Ferguson must surely settle on a central pair and give them time to develop an understanding, or buy someone better to partner Stam.

Pallister's dominant performance on his first return to Old Trafford since joining Boro in the summer only reinforced the view that he was sold a year too soon.

The person who adds to United's defensive uncertainty is the goalkeeper. Someone, somewhere seems to have made a subtle switch, for the man between the United sticks is surely not Peter Schmeichel but a less-talented twin.

The big Dane was once renowned for his presence. Now it his presents. Take Boro's first goal: when Gary Neville carelessly waved through the impressive Dean Gordon's cross, Schmeichel fatally stayed on his line, allowing Brian Deane to set up Hamilton Ricard to score.

Match stats

	ManU	Boro
Possession	56%	44%
Attempts on target	7	6
Attempts off target	8	6
Corners	14	3
Fouls	11	9
Offsides	0	6
Bookings	1	1

Boro's football did not offer much fantasy, especially without the suspended Paul Gascoigne. Basically they played simple balls up to Ricard and Deane, and allowed the big but mobile pair to create havoc on the ground and in the air.

The team is hard-working, strong, experienced, well-organised and, given their recent run, increasingly confident. Robson rated this performance the best in his 4½ years in charge.

Goal No. 2 followed a poor headed clearance by the central defender Ronnie Johnsen which the unmarked Gordon rifled home from 20 yards. Then, for No. 3, Ricard pounced on an awful pass by Johnsen and fed Deane, who shrugged off a powder-puff challenge from Phil Neville to score.

The man in charge of United, Jim Ryan, was a few weeks ago the reserve-team coach. Now here he stood in his first senior game as No. 1, eager to show why he should be made Kidd's successor, and they were 3–0 down.

To United's credit, they did storm back. Nicky Butt scored within three minutes with a header, then on 69 minutes the substitute Paul Scholes added another after finishing off a move he began.

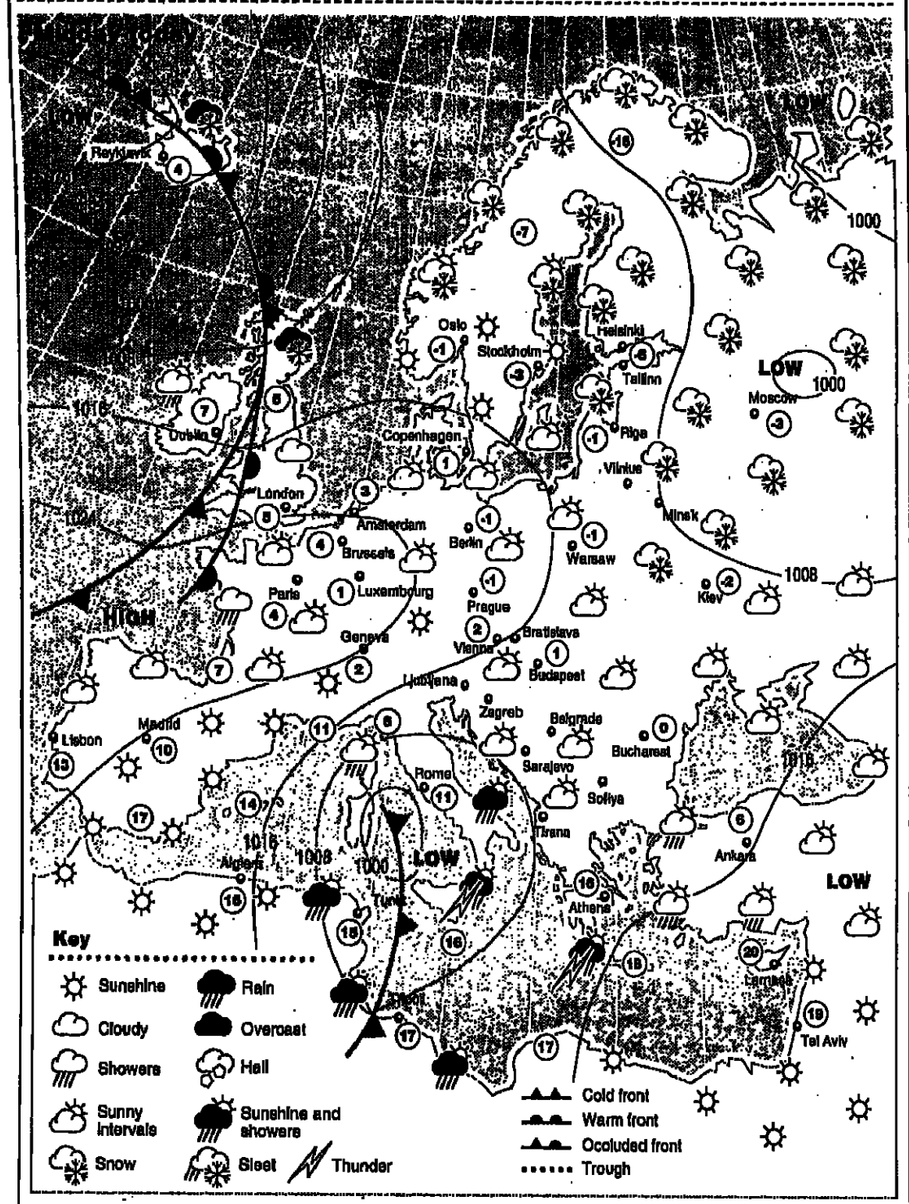
Coming into this game United had suffered four bad draws in a row — five if you count being handed Internazionale in the Champions League quarter-finals. But they would have settled for another one now.

However, Andy Cole missed a sitter and the three-goal deficit proved too much. As a result United lost their unbeaten home record and Bernie Slavin will today lose his trousers after the former Boro striker promised to bare all in a local shop window if the team won. Fergie probably wishes he could get to the bottom of things so easily.

Danish blue . . . a deflated Peter Schmeichel rues Boro's second goal

Television and radio
The weather in Europe
Midday today

The weather in Europe



Forecast for the cities

Today

	max	min	weather
Algiers	18	8	H
Amsterdam	3	1	Sh
Athens	16	13	F
Berlin	-1	-3	F
Bonn	2	0	Sl
Brussels	4	1	F
Copenhagen	1	-4	S
Crete	18	13	S
Geneva	3	-2	C
Larnaca	20	10	F
London	6	3	F
Madrid	10	-3	S
Milan	8	-2	Sh
Nice	11	6	S
Oslo	-1	-7	Sn
Paris	4	1	C
Rome	11	6	Sh
Stockholm	-3	-10	Sn
Tunis	18	11	R
Vienna	2	-3	Sl

Tomorrow

	max	min	weather
Algiers	18	8	F
Amsterdam	7	4	F
Athens	16	9	Th
Berlin	1	-1	Sn
Bonn	8	2	C
Brussels	8	4	C
Copenhagen	0	-3	C
Crete	18	10	Sh
Geneva	3	-2	F
Larnaca	20	11	Sh
London	7	5	F
Madrid	10	-1	S
Milan	6	-2	S
Nice	13	5	S
Oslo	-3	-6	Sn
Paris	5	2	C
Rome	12	1	S
Stockholm	-7	-12	F
Tunis	14	8	Sh
Vienna	3	-2	F

Wednesday

	max	min	weather
Algiers	17	3	F
Amsterdam	7	3	R
Athens	10	6	Sh
Berlin	3	0	Sl
Bonn	9	3	Sh
Brussels	7	3	Sh
Copenhagen	2	0	Sn
Crete	16	9	Sh
Geneva	4	-1	F
Larnaca	19	9	Th
London	8	2	Sh
Madrid	8	2	F
Milan	6	-1	F
Nice	12	5	S
Oslo	-1	-3	Sn
Paris	7	2	Sh
Rome	13	1	S
Stockholm	-3	-6	F
Tunis	14	5	F
Vienna	4	-2	F

Thursday

	max	min	weather
Algiers	18	5	F
Amsterdam	8	3	Sh
Athens	16	5	H
Berlin	4	1	Dr
Bonn	7	3	Sh
Brussels	6	4	F
Copenhagen	3	0	Dr
Crete	14	9	Sh
Geneva	4	0	Sh
Larnaca	19	9	Th
London	8	4	Sh
Madrid	10	4	F
Milan	4	0	M
Nice	12	5	Sh
Oslo	0	-2	Sn
Paris	7	4	C
Rome	13	2	S
Stockholm	1	-2	C
Tunis	15	8	F
Vienna	3	-2	F

C, cloudy; Dr, drizzle; F, fair; Fg, fog; H, hail; R, rain; Sl, sleet; Sn, snow; S, sunny; Th, thunder. * (one hour only)

Around the world

Yesterday's lunchtime reports

Ajaccio	D	11	52
Algiers	F	16	61
Alicante	C	15	59
Amsterdam	S	6	43
Athens	S	13	55
Bahrain	S	25	77
Bangkok	C	32	90
Barcelona	C	12	54
Beijing	F	2	36
Belgrade	Fg	-2	28
Berlin	F	4	39
Bermuda	C	19	66
Biarritz	Sh	9	48
Bombay	S	31	88
Bordeaux	R	8	43
Boston	C	7	45
Brussels	F	5	41
Budapest	Fg	-2	28
Cairo	S	17	63
Calcutta	S	25	77
Cape Town	F	22	72
Casablanca	S	17	63
Chicago	C	3	37
Copenhagen	C	2	36
Corfu	F	13	55
Dallas	C	12	54
Dhaka	S	27	81
Dublin	S	2	36
Faro	F	16	61
Florence	M	7	45
Frankfurt	C	5	41
Funchal	Sh	18	64
Geneva	Sn	1	34
Gibraltar	F	17	63
Helsinki	Sn	-1	30
Hong Kong	C	21	70
Innsbruck	C	1	34
Istanbul	C	8	46
Joburg	F	23	73
K Lumpur	C	28	84
Kingston	F	31	88
Larnaca	F	18	64
Lima	F	22	72
Lisbon	C	15	59
London	S	5	41
Los Angeles	C	15	59
Luxembourg	D	4	39
Madrid	F	13	55
Majorca	C	16	61
Malaga	F	19	66
Malta	C	16	61
Melbourne	C	15	59
Mexico City	C	21	70
Miami	C	27	81
Milan	R	5	41
Montreal	Sn	-6	21
Moscow	C	1	34
Munich	F	4	39
Nairobi	F	28	79
Naples	R	11	52
New Delhi	F	15	59
New Orleans	C	27	81
New York	C	8	46
Nice	C	10	50
Oporto	Sh	14	57
Oslo	S	0	32
Paris	R	4	39
Perth	S	24	75
Prague	C	3	37
Reykjavik	C	-2	28
Rhodes	F	13	55
Rio de Jan.	F	28	82
Rome	C	13	55
Sanjiwo	M	2	36
Singapore	C	30	86
Stockholm	S	-2	28
Strasbourg	R	4	39
Sydney	F	28	82
Tel Aviv	F	18	64
Tenerife	F	21	70
Tokyo	S	12	55
Toronto	R	5	41
Tunis	F	17	63
Vancouver	C	-1	30
Venice	M	5	43
Vienna	C	4	39
Warsaw	R	3	39
Washington	C	10	50
Wellington	C	20	68
Zurich	R	2	36

European weather outlook

Scandinavia

A mixture of sunny spells and snow showers across the bulk of Scandinavia. The showers merging at times in Norway, especially towards western coasts, but in the south the showers will be isolated with Denmark staying dry. Max tempa ranging from -17C (1F) in the far north to 2C (36F) at best in Denmark and along western coasts of Norway.

Low Countries, Germany, Austria, Switzerland

Cold but mainly dry with sunny spells, however, cloud will tend to increase through the afternoon with rain breaking out towards the evening. Max tempa mainly -1 to 4C (30-39F).

France

Northern coasts of France will become cloudy with rain breaking out. However, elsewhere in France it will be mainly dry with sunny spells with only the odd shower in the south-west. Max tempa ranging from 1C (34F) in the coldest spots to 15C (59F) in the warmest parts along the Mediterranean coast.

Spain and Portugal

Fine in most parts after morning mist and fog patches thin and clear from inland parts. There will be sunshine across the region with only the Balearic Islands at risk of catching a few showers. Max tempa ranging from 10C (50F) in Madrid to 17C (63F) on the Costa Blanca.

Italy

A showery day with the showers heavy and prolonged in many parts. There is also likely to be thundery downpours in the south but further north the showers will become more scattered and in the far north it will become dry but cold and windy. Max tempa 6C (43F) in the far north but generally 11-16C (53-61F).

Greece

Sunny spells and showers, some of the showers are heavy with the risk of thunder. Max tempa 12-18C (54-64F).

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Television and radio

BBC 1

7.00am Business Breakfast. 9.00 BBC Breakfast News. 10.00 Kilroy. 10.40 Style Challenge. 11.00 City Hospital. 11.55 Weather. 12.00 News; Regional News and Weather. 12.05 Good Living with Jane Asher. 12.35 Can't Cook, Won't Cook. 12.55 News; Regional News and Weather. 1.00 Pass the Buck. 1.30 Going for a Song. 1.55 The Weather Show. 2.00 News. 2.30 Regional News and Weather. 2.40 Neighbours. 3.05 Ireside. 3.25 Battersea Dogs' Home. 4.35 Children's BBC: Playdays. 4.45 Enchanted Lands: The Magic of the Faraway Tree. 4.55 Badger and Badger. 5.10 Alvin and the Chipmunks. 5.25 Goosebumps. 5.50 Newsround. 6.10 Blue Peter. 6.35 Neighbours. 7.00 News. 7.50 Regional News Magazine. 8.00 This is Your Life. 8.30 Here and Now. 9.00 EastEnders. 9.30 Birds of a Feather. 10.00 Nine O'Clock News. 10.30 Harry Enfield's Television Programme. 11.00 Panorama. 11.40 They Think It's All Over. 12.10 FILM: Escape from Terror: The Teresa Stamper Story. 1.40 BBC News 24.

BBC 2

7.30am A Different Way of Learning. 8.00 Children's BBC: Wiggly Park. 8.05 Teletubbies. 8.30 Yogi's Treasure Hunt. 8.55 Blue Peter. 9.20 Funky Phantom. 9.45 Romuald the Reindeer. 9.55 Tales of the Tooth Fairies. 10.00 Wiggly Bear. 10.05 The Pat Sharp Show. 10.30 Great Romances of the 20th Century. 11.00 Children's BBC: Teletubbies. 11.20 FILM: Jane Eyre. 1.05 The Roadshow Collection. 1.30 Working Lunch. 2.00 Children's BBC: Romuald the Reindeer. 2.10 The Arts and Crafts Hour. 2.40 Match of the Day Greats. 3.40 Items; Regional News and Weather. 3.45 On Cue with Steve Davis. 4.35 News; Regional News and Weather. 4.50 Gardeners' World. 5.00 Change That. 5.25 Ready, Steady, Cook. 5.55 Livell. 6.00 Cricket. The Ashes. 7.00 The Simpsons. 7.30 Space 1999. 8.15 Hi, Mike or Maybe. 8.30 Sound Stories. 9.00 Quentin Wilson's Bangers and Cash. 9.30 Food and Drink. 10.00 The Natural World. 10.50 Trade Secrets. 11.20 Big Train. 11.55 Video Nation Shorts. 11.50 Newsnight. 12.40 On Air: The Truth About TV. 12.55 Weather. 1.00 Despatch Box. 1.50 Learning Zone. 5.30 Close.

BBC Prime

● Intelsat

7.00am World News. 7.30 Badger and Badger. 7.45 Blue Peter. 8.10 Sloggers. 8.35 Hot Chefs. 8.45 Ready, Steady, Cook. 9.10 Style Challenge. 9.40 Clarissa That. 10.05 Kilroy. 10.45 Classic EastEnders. 11.15 Songs of Praise. 11.50 Hot Chefs. 12.05 Fat Man in France. 12.30 Ready, Steady, Cook. 1.00 Can't Cook, Won't Cook. 1.30 Clarissa That. 1.55 World Weather. 2.00 Wildlife. 2.30 Classic EastEnders. 3.00 Kilroy. 3.40 Style Challenge. 4.05 Weather. 4.10 Hot Chefs. 4.30 Jackanory Gold. 4.35 Blue Peter. 5.00 Sloggers. 5.20 Wildlife. 5.50 World News. 6.20 Ready, Steady, Cook. 7.00 Classic EastEnders. 7.30 Gary Rhodes. 8.00 Citizen Smith. 8.30 The Goodies. 9.00 The Fawlty Man. 10.00 World News and Business Report. 10.25 Weather. 10.30 The Antiques Show. 11.00 Top of the Pops 2. 11.45 The O Zone. 12.00 Shadow of the Noose. 12.55 Weather. 1.00 Activ8.

BBC World

● Eutelsat

7.00am World News and Weather. 7.30 World Living: Earth Report. 8.00 World News and Weather. 8.30 Hard Talk. 9.00 World News and Weather. 9.30 World Focus: Correspondent. 10.00 World News and Weather. 10.30 Hardtalk. 11.00 World News and Weather. 11.30 World Living: Top Gear. 11.55 World City Guides. 12.00 The World Today. 12.30 World City Guides. 1.00 The World Today. 1.30 World Focus: Correspondent. 2.00 World News. 2.15 World Business Report and Weather. 2.30 The World Today. 3.00 World Living: Future Fantastic. 3.55 World City Guides. 4.00 World News and Weather. 4.30 Hard Talk. 5.00 World News and Weather. 5.30 World Focus: Science World. 6.00 World News and Weather. 6.30 World Living: Earth Report. 6.55 World City Guides. 7.00 The World Today. 7.30 Hard Talk. 9.00 World News and Weather. 9.30 World Focus: Science World. 9.55 World City Guides. 10.00 World News. 10.10 World Business Report and Weather. 10.30 World Living: Holiday. 11.00 World News. 11.10 Europe Direct. 11.55 World City Guides. 12.00 World News and Weather. 12.30 World Business Report. 12.45 Asia Today and Weather. 12.55 World City Guides. 1.00 World News and Weather. 1.30 World Living: Earth Report. 2.00 News and Weather. 2.30 Asia Today. 2.45 World Business Report. 2.55 World City Guides. 3.00 News and Weather. 3.30 USA Direct. 4.00 News and Weather. 4.30 Asia Today. 4.45 World Business Report. 5.00 News and Weather. 5.30 USA Direct. 6.00 News and Weather. 6.30 World Focus: Science World. 6.55 World City Guides.

Radio 4

92.4-94.6 MHz 198 kHz (1514)

7.00am Today. 8.30 (LW) Rejoice FM. 10.00 Start the Week. 10.45 (LW) Daily Service. 10.48 Serial: Dear Bill. 11.00 Women's Hour. 11.00 (LW) Rejoice FM. 12.00 Snapshots from the New South Africa. 12.30 My Granny Cats. 1.00 (LW) News Headlines; Shipping Forecast. 1.00 News. 1.04 You and Yours. 1.04 (LW) Rejoice FM. 2.00 The World at One. 2.30 Ends of Brains 1998. 3.00 The Archers. 3.15 Afternoon Play: Return to Lyonesse. 4.00 Money Box Live: (0171) 580 4444. 4.30 Red Borne. 4.45 With Great Pleasure. 5.00 The Food Programme. 5.30 Turning World. 6.00 PM. 6.27 Weather. 7.00 Six O'Clock News. 7.30 I'm Sorry I Haven't a Clue. 8.00 The Archers. 8.15 Front Row. 8.45 Under One Roof. 9.00 Love is Not Enough: Overseas Adoptions. 9.30 Analysis. 10.00 Nature: Life on the Brandberg. 10.30 Start the Week. 11.00 The World Tonight. 11.45 Book at Bedtime: Spiderwick. 12.00 Radio 4 Appeal. 12.02 Fatherland. 12.30 Rebel Music. 12.50 (LW) Today in Parliament. 1.00 (LW) Rejoice FM. 1.00 News. 1.30 (LW) Test Match Special. 1.30 The Late Book: Aphrodite. 1.45 Shipping Forecast. 2.00 As World Service. 5.20 World News. 5.35 Shipping Forecast. 5.40 Inshore Forecast. 5.45 Prayer for the Day. 5.47 Farming Today.

BBC World Service

BBC World Service can be received in England on MW 648 kHz (463m) and in Western Europe on LW 198 kHz (1515m)

5.00am News. 5.10 Off the Shelf: PlayBack. 5.30 The Vintage Chart Show. 6.00 News. 6.10 Pause for Thought. 6.15 Movie Call. 10.00 News; (648 only) News in German. 10.09 World Business Report. 10.15 Record News. 10.30 Weshwy Access. 10.45 Sports Round-Up. 11.00 Newsdesk. 11.30 Omnibus. 12.00 Newsdesk. 12.30 Jazzmatazz. 1.00 News. 1.09 World Business Report. 1.15 Britain Today. 1.30 Seven Days. 1.45 Sports Round-Up. 2.00 Newshour. 3.00 News. 3.09 Outlook. 3.30 Planet 2000. 4.00 World News; (648 only) News in German. 4.09 Sports Roundup. 4.15 Weshwy Access. 4.30 Electronic Jukebox. 5.00 News. 5.15 Seven Days. 5.30 Insight; (648 only) News in German. 5.45 Britain Today. 6.00 Europe Today. 6.30 World Business Report. 6.45 Sports Roundup. 7.00 Newsdesk. 7.30 Brain of Britain 1998; (648 only) News in German. 8.00 News Summary. 8.01 Outlook. 8.05 Pause for Thought. 8.30 Multitrack Hit List. 9.00 Newshour. 10.00 News. 10.05 World Business Report. 10.15 Britain Today. 10.30 Tying the Knot. 11.00 Newsdesk. 11.30 Insight. 11.45 Sports Round-Up. 12.00 News. 12.09 Outlook. 12.30 Multitrack Hit List. 1.00 Newsdesk. 1.30 Weshwy. 1.45 Britain Today. 2.00 Newsdesk. 2.30 Seven Days. 2.45 Wild Tales. 3.00 Newsday. 3.30 On Screen. 4.00 News. 4.09 World Business Report. 4.15 Sports Round-Up. 4.30 The Ides of the City. 5.00 The World Today. 6.00 The World Today.

Sky Premier

● Astra

7.00 Mother Knows Best. 8.30 Old Yeller. 11.00 The Preacher's Wife. 1.00 Mother Knows Best. 2.00 Old Yeller. 4.30 Barry Norman's Film Night. 5.00 Slaughtaday. 7.00 Larger Than Life. 8.50 The Preacher's Wife. 11.00 Sudden Death. 12.50 Extreme Measures. 2.30 Outrage. 4.30 The War of the Roses.

Sky MovieMax

● Astra

7.00 Weekend Reunion. 8.45 That's Right, You're Wrong. 10.30 Sense and Sensibility. 12.40 Return to Snowy River. 2.25 The Undercover Kid. 4.00 Weekend Reunion. 6.00 Return to Snowy River. 7.40 Sense and Sensibility. 10.00 Grace of My Heart. 12.00 Anaconda. 1.50 Story Nine Seconds. 3.00 Mind Breakers. 4.35 Hidden in America.

Sky Cinema

● Astra

5.00 Flying Down to Rio. 7.00 No Highway in the Sky. 9.00 The Rain People. 11.00 The Milagro Beanfield War. 1.00 Earth vs the Flying Saucers. 2.50 The Directors: The Films of Herbert Ross. 5.30 The Duchess and the Dirtwater Fox. 8.15 Love Me Tender.

Sky Sports

● Astra

5.00 Football. 8.30 Racing News. 10.00 Aerobics. 10.30 World Sport. 11.00 Pool: World Masters. 12.00 Football League Review. 1.00 Aerobics. 1.30 What a Weekend. 2.00 Football Special. 3.30 Spanish Football. 5.30 V-Max. 6.00 Pool: World Masters. 7.00 Sports Centre. 7.30 What a Weekend. 8.00 Football: Leeds United v Coventry City – Live. 11.15 Sports Centre. 11.30 Football League Review. 12.30 V-Max. 1.00 Sports Centre. 1.15 Football: Leeds United v Coventry City. 3.15 Football. 4.15 Sports Centre. 4.30 Close.

Sky Sports 3

● Astra

1.00 Basketball: Edinburgh Rocks v Chester Jets. 3.30 Golf: Presidents Cup. 8.30 World Windsurfing. 9.00 Football League Review. 7.00 Fish TV. 8.00 World Motor Sport. 11.00 Dickie Davies' Sporting Heroes. 12.00 Golden Age of Motor Racing. 12.30 Close.

Eurosport

● Astra/Eutelsat

8.30 Swimming: European Short Course Championships. 10.00 Biathlon: World Cup. 11.30 Luge: World Cup. 12.30 Alpine Skiing: Men's World Cup Downhill. 1.30 Athletics: European Cross-Country Championships. 2.30 Ski-Jumping: World Cup. 3.30 Biathlon: World Cup. 5.30 Alpine Skiing: Men's World Cup. 6.30 Ski-Jumping: World Cup. 7.15 Extreme Sports. 8.15 Alpine Skiing: Men's World Cup – Live. 9.00 Car Racing: Race of Champions. 10.00 Boxing: British & Commonwealth Super Middleweight Titles. 11.00 Football. 12.30 Alpine Skiing: World Cup. 1.30 Close.

Sky 1

● Astra

5.00 The Simpsons. 5.30 The Chris Evans Breakfast Show. 9.30 Hollywood Squares. 10.00 Sally! 11.00 Sally Jessy Raphael. 12.00 The Oprah Winfrey Show. 1.00 The Chris Evans Breakfast Show. 1.55 Special K Collection. 2.00 Days of Our Lives. 2.55 Special K Collection. 3.00 Sally Jessy Raphael. 3.55 Special K Collection. 4.00 Jerry Jones. 4.55 Special K Collection. 5.00 Gofish! 6.00 Star Trek: DS9. 7.00 Married... With Children. 7.30 Friends. 8.00 The Simpsons. 8.30 Real TV. 9.00 Star Trek: DS9. 10.00 Sliders. 11.00 South Park. 11.30 Seinfeld. 12.00 Friends. 12.30 Star Trek: DS9. 1.30 Renegade. 2.30 Long Play.

National Geographic

● Astra

5.00 Liechtenstein's Harlebeast. 6.00 Inside Tibet. 10.00 Natural Born Killers: Tiger's Eye. 10.30 Natural Born Killers: Kimberley's Sea Crocodiles. 11.00 Borneo: Beyond The Caves. 11.30 Can't Drown This Town. 12.00 Beyond the Clouds. 1.00 Mystery of the Neanderthals. 1.30 Inherit the Sand. 2.00 Close.

UK Gold

● Astra

5.00 Crossroads. 5.30 Neighbours. 5.55 EastEnders. 6.20 The Bill. 6.50 The Bill. 7.20 The House of Eliott. 11.30 Angels. 12.00 Dallas. 12.55 Neighbours. 1.25 EastEnders. 2.00 Juliet Bravo. 3.00 Dallas. 3.55 The Bill. 4.25 The Bill. 4.55 EastEnders. 5.30 Angels. 6.00 All Creatures Great and Small. 7.00 Due South. 8.00 May to December. 8.40 It Ain't Half Hot, Mum. 9.10 Dad's Army. 9.00 Pet and Margaret. 11.45 Taggart. 12.50 The Bill. 1.20 The Bill. 1.50 Sports Anorak of the Year. 2.20 Spender. 3.15 Best of the Old Grey Whistle Test. 3.55 Shopping with Screenshop.

Discovery

● Astra/Intelsat

5.00 Fishing World. 5.30 Walker's World. 6.00 Connections 2. 6.30 Jurassica. 7.00 Animal Doctor. 7.30 Alaskan Wilds. 8.30 Beyond 2000. 9.30 Miller Discovery: Walk on the Wild Side. 10.00 Natural Disasters. 10.30 Natural Disasters. 11.00 Super Structures. 12.00 TBR 2. 1.00 Empire of the East. 2.00 Connections 2. 2.30 Ancient Warriors. 3.00 Close.

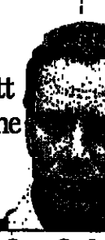
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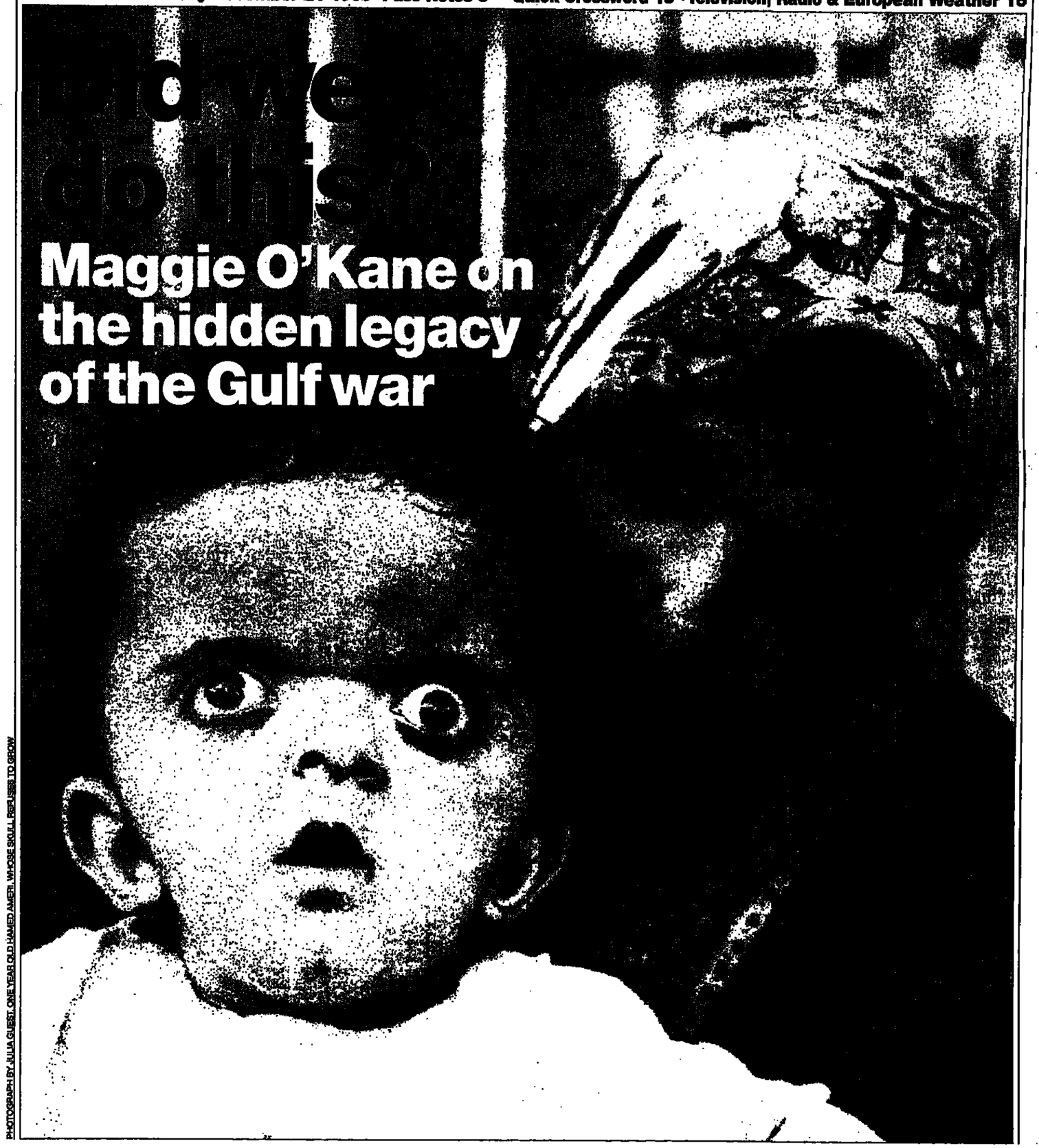
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Maggie O'Kane on the hidden legacy of the Gulf war

PHOTOGRAPH BY JULIA GUEST. ONE YEAR OLD HAMED AMEER, WHOSE SKULL FAILED TO GROW

One million rounds of bullets tipped with uranium were fired during the Gulf war. They slice through tanks. And this is what they do to humans

Maggie O'Kane reports on Iraq's deformed children, victims of a war they never knew

The movement inside her body is strange: different from her three other children. As Suad Jope waits for her birth-time, she passes the hours and the spasms announcing it by sliding her back along the maternity corridor's grubby cream walls.

It's night now, the early hours. In the afternoon, her consultant, Dr Haifa Ashahine, had stood over her bed, taken a Biro from the left breast pocket of her white doctor's coat and traced the spine of Suad's child, holding the X-ray above her head towards a strip light on the ceiling.

At 34, and already the mother of three children, Suad has been through this all before. Her heavy cotton nightgown is sprinkled with pale apple blossoms and hangs down almost covering the puffy ankles of a woman approaching labour. That afternoon, Dr Haifa Ashahine had stopped and said: "See, the spine ends here. There is no head."

Dr Ashahine, a senior gynaecologist at the Saddam Hussein Children's Hospital in southern Iraq, is not shocked. If it is not a child without a brain, then maybe it's one with a giant head, stumpy arms like those of a thalidomide victim, two fingers instead of five, a heart with missing valves, missing ears. The deformities have one thing in common: they are congenital.

In Iraq, the health authorities say that at least three times more children are being born with congenital deformities than before the Gulf war. Now, in both Britain and the United States, veterans of that same war are coming forward with reports of sick and dying children. In Britain, the Ministry of Defence has agreed to an £800,000 independent survey of reproduction that will cover every veteran that served in the Gulf.

Last summer, the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine carried out a pilot study of 400 veterans. On the basis of that, they have given the go-ahead for a survey of every serviceman and woman who served in the Gulf war. The study is to include specific questions about "occupation and environmental exposures". According to the MoD, no results will be available before the year 2000.

The brutal irony is that the most likely origin of this gene-twisting force is not Iraqi, but Western. During the 100-hour ground war of February 1991, coalition planes fired at least one million rounds of ammunition coated in a radioactive material known as depleted uranium, or DU.

There is another explanation for this genetic plague: the environmental pollution caused when chemical and biological centres were blown up in an effort to "degrade" the Iraqi arsenal. But radiation from depleted uranium rounds remains the most plausible explanation.

"We know that depleted uranium is toxic and can cause diseases," says *Dr Howard Urnovitz, a microbiologist* who has testified before the Presidential Advisory Committee on Gulf War Veterans' Illnesses.

"This is the beginning," says Dr Jawad-al Ali, a paediatrician and fellow of the Royal College of Surgeons. He is based in southern Iraq's largest hospital and has spent three years researching congenital defects and cancers in children. "Something happened to our environment in that war. Maybe it was DU or maybe it was the chemicals that were released when we were bombed — we can't say for sure yet, but something has happened to our environment.

"We even see it in the plant and agricultural life. Giant marrows, huge tomatoes — it's clear that there has been some sort of genetic modification since the war."

In a Guardian investigation which has involved talking to doctors all over central and southern Iraq — inspecting maternity logs, birth defect registers and personal records taken by midwives and paediatricians — a terrifying pattern emerges. There has been a clear increase in birth defects, ranging from thalidomide-type deformities to entire villages where the children of different families are being born blind or with internal congenital defects in the heart and lungs. The highest concentration is in the south of Iraq.

Two hours south of the southern Iraqi city of Basra, the road comes to an abrupt stop at a fence of barbed wire some eight metres high. This is the controlled zone, a graveyard of rusting Iraqi tanks riddled with bullets and abandoned there since the war. The Guardian was the first independent foreign newspaper to enter the region since the war. Using simple radiation Geiger counters, we measured high levels of radiation in the destroyed tanks and in the desert that surrounded them. The source of the radiation was a substance that had never been used in the battlefield before the Gulf war. Iraq became the laboratory for an untested and unknown material — DU.

A byproduct of the manufacture of nuclear weapons and energy production techniques used in nuclear power plants, DU is the heaviest metal in the world. Britain imported 500 tonnes from the US in 1981. Its attraction is that bullets tipped with DU are so tough that they can slice through tanks like a knife through butter.

The problem is that when DU-tipped bullets hit the target they explode, sending millions of tiny radioactive particles into the atmosphere. "This is when it becomes most dangerous," says Arjun Makhani, the President of the US Institute for Energy and Environmental Research. Once released, the particles can be directly inhaled, can pollute the water table and enter the food chain, spreading radioactive pollution over thousands of square *miles. Exposure to this kind of radia*tion, as well as to chemical pollution, can cause genetic damage because of the ease with which the uranium can cross the placenta to the foetus(1). According to the Department of Defense in the United States, at least 40 tonnes of DU were left on the battlefields of southern Iraq.

Professor Selma al-Taha is 62 and wears a finely woven headscarf of white silk over an impeccable bun. From a pint-sized office on the fourth floor of the Baab al-Muadam medical college — dedicated, as every establishment in Iraq is, to Saddam Hussein — she runs the country's only functioning genetics laboratory. She studied for a masters degree in Human Genetics at Edinburgh University and worked in the Western General Hospital in the city. "Such a lovely city, so easy to get around," she says. "And the picnics, I remember the picnics."

In 1975 she established the first genetics laboratory in Iraq and is the country's leading geneticist. "I first began noticing the increase around 1993," she says. "By the end of the year I was sure there was something wrong. We've no idea of the real scale of it, because most of it is happening in the south and people nowadays have no money to travel to the capital. Still, from the data it's clear that we were being presented with complicated congenital defects that we have either never seen before, or only very rarely seen.

"Something has happened to the environment since the war. It is true that it could be pollution due to smoke or chemicals, but the reason we believe the most probable cause is radiation is because radiation is most effective on a fast-changing organism like a foetus or a growing child. Also, the organs most susceptible to radiation, after the kidneys, are the reproductive organ — the gonads and the ovaries.

"We are getting a huge increase in late miscarriages for unknown reasons. We're getting mothers as young as 20 giving birth to mongol babies, which shouldn't happen. My research shows that the number of children born with Down's syndrome-type defects has tripled since the war." She admits her statistics are sketchy and that from her Baghdad headquarters she can't monitor the whole country.

Twenty-five-year old Dr Zenad Mohammed is making her own attempt to monitor the problem. She is five months pregnant and doing her maternity training in the Saddam Hussein Teaching Hospital in Basra — a jumble of one-storey buildings with peeling white paint, *filled with a pale odour of disinfec*tant. Outside, two decorators are delicately crafting the green, white and orange stripes of the Iraqi flag on to the concrete. Dr Zenad is carrying her first baby and she watches these things very, very carefully. "I'm scanning myself every day. I know I shouldn't but I'm terrified."

For the past three months Dr Zenad, terrified of giving birth to a deformed child, has been monitoring the birth defects in their delivery room, where 20 to 30 babies are born daily. She keeps her findings in a hard-backed grey notebook. In a scrawny blue Biro she has divided the page into columns, in which she writes the sexes, dates of birth and weights of the babies. In a fourth column, she logs their deformities. She begins:

"August — we had three babies born with no head. Four had abnormally large heads. In September we had six with no heads, none with large heads and two with short limbs. In October, one with no head, four with big heads and four with deformed limbs or other types of deformities."

Stuck up on the hot water boiler of a kitchen in Wiltshire is a typewritten letter from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. It is inviting Darren and Julia Office to take part in a survey to investigate the "effects of serving in the Gulf war, and in the armed forces in general, on reproduction and child health". Their daughter Kimberley has a congenital deformity that affects her chromosomes. She is almost six, but the size of a three-year-old. Her deformity has led to heart and lung problems. When it was diagnosed, their doctors told them to go away and page 4 ▸



Legacy . . . Iraqi health authorities report a tripling of deformed babies since the end of the Gulf war

ALL PHOTOGRAPHS: JULIA GUEST

NT Royal National Theatre

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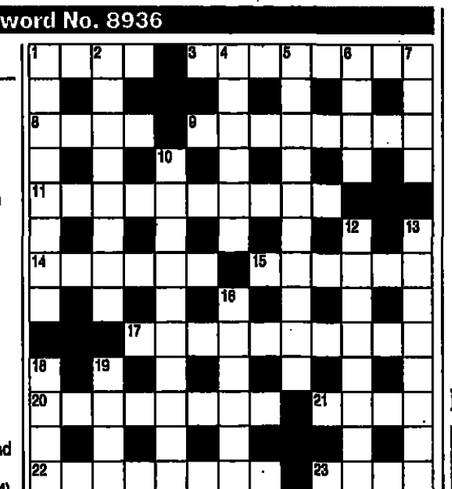
Quick Crossword No. 8936

Across

1 Toothed device — crest (4)
3 Official in government or church (8)
8 Payment for accommodation (4)
9 Hostile (8)
11 Thin as Lowry figures (10)
14 Covering (8)
15 Electronic malfunction (8)
17 Capability (10)
20 Banter (8)
21 Attempt — with gun? (4)
22 List of events and times (8)
23 Scottish valley (4)

Down

1 Pottery (8)
2 Unchanging dullness (8)
4 Congenital (6)
5 Spotless (10)
6 Nail — change direction (4)
7 List — bread! (4)
10 Spoilt before purchase? (10)
12 French author of "Red and Black" (8)
13 Be a menace (8)
16 It may be vicious (6)
18 Rainbow — flag (4)
19 The white of an orange (4)



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BREWNOTECASE
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BLANKVERSE
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Closing date: Noon, 8 January 1999

NOTTINGHAM

DEPUTY DIRECTOR

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Pass notes

No 1320

Impeachment



Age: 622.

Appearance: Infrequent.

Come on, we all know this is about Clinton. Who's that a picture of? That's Warren Hastings (1732-1818), the first Governor-General of Bengal.

And what's he got to do with it? Hastings was the Slick Willie of his day. Chronically bogged down in messy Anglo-Indian politics, he returned to England to find himself impeached in the House of Lords.

Don't tell me, he had an affair with an intern and lied about it to a special investigator? Not quite, but the allegations against Hastings wouldn't look out of place in the modern world: there was a cash-for-troops scandal, an extortion charge, a bit of treaty-breaking...

Sounds like the man was completely corrupt: No, he wasn't. But it took seven years and 145 sittings of the House of Lords to find that out.

Even more deadly than reading the Starr report, then: Indeed. The Hastings impeachment was so tedious, in fact, that the English more or less dumped the procedure. Only one Brit has been impeached since — Lord Melville, in 1806.

When did Hastings's impeachment happen? Well, Edmund Burke, the great Whig, began proceedings in 1786, convinced Pitt the Younger of his case, and the trial began in 1788.

Wasn't that... Yes, exactly the time the hallowed American Constitution was being framed. It would appear that the Hastings case excited the founding fathers so much that they slapped it into Article II, Section 4.

Even though we'd decided the procedure was too long-winded: There's also the small matter that the British executive is responsible to the House of Commons, which, with a simple vote of no confidence, can dump a prime minister any time it likes.

And what happened to Warren? He was acquitted on all charges, but the trial left him a ruined man, and only the generosity of the East India Company saved him from poverty in old age.

Any other great British impeachments? Well, there was the Archbishop of Canterbury, William Laud, who was impeached in 1640 for treason and beheaded on Tower Hill...

Now there's an idea.

1000 years in 500 days will appear in tomorrow's G2

'In August we had three babies born with no heads. In September we had six . . .'

◀ page 2enjoy her life because she might not have long. It was, they said, "just one of those things".

Warminster is bleak on a wet Saturday in December. It is a military town with two army bases and an unmanned train station with a screen that advises travellers to London to change at Salisbury. The Offices' terraced home is comfortable and their daughter, Kimberley, with her stack of books and Barbie doll, gets the lavish love and care of a six-year-old whose suffering has broken her parents' heart. There is a Spice Girls video and a video recorder poised to tape their last Christmas together on the wine- and purple-checked sofa before the arrival of the new baby.

"I started to think about it when I learned that out of the 27 in my group, three of us had children who are sick," says Darren. "There was a baby that died at birth, another one and our Kimberley. We were talking among ourselves, and people were saying that there were too many sick babies. It's the kiddies I'm thinking about."

Julie is due to give birth to her second child in three weeks. As the birth approaches, she is becoming more and more worried: "I just thought that we had to come forward and talk about this. There are a lot who don't, because they're still in the services and afraid of making a fuss. I can't put my hand on my heart and say it was the Gulf war — I don't know. Nobody knows yet. But there are too many people talking about the deformities. We were two healthy young people. We had no history of congenital illness."

Darren went to the Gulf in October 1990 with the Queen's Royal Irish Hussars. For most of the war he and his regiment were far from the fighting, but for the last seven days they were at the front, at the Basra Road, where some of a heavy air bombardment in the final days of the war led to the death of thousands. It was here that the greatest number of depleted uranium rounds were fired.

Darren and his unit reached the road after the dead had been looted but before their bodies had been removed: "We were on the road for about 10 hours. It was after the ceasefire, and with a couple of the guys we went wandering through the wreckage. We had never heard of depleted uranium and hadn't been warned about taking any precautions."



The village of Abbarra is two hours' drive north of Baghdad, close to the Iranian border where the brick factories bake mud in the traditional way and the land is fertile with aubergine and cucumber. In a compound, the neighbours have gathered, and hot, sweet tea from delicate glasses is offered while the children of the blind families are sent for.

Since the war, five children from three separate families have been born here in this tiny village with a strange congenital blindness. These families are the subject of a special study by the Baghdad Genetic Clinic. "All their fathers served in the war," says Professor Selma al-Taha. "There is no history of any kind of congenital blindness and they are all from different families. The only other possibility is vitamin deficiency, but they are farmers and relatively well off in that respect." One of the children, Azhar, is four. She moves across the mats of the meeting room, arms outstretched, feeling the air in front of her, calling for her father.

The concern in Iraq is that the radiation from DU, which has a radioactive half-life of at least 4,000 years is spreading around the country. "It's in the food chain now," says Professor al-Taha. "Dates are being sent from the south — oranges, tomatoes, there isn't any way to control the spread." The birth of deformed babies is not confined to the south.

Dr Basma Al Asam has been a gynaecologist for 22 years. She works in the Al Manoor hospital in Baghdad, one of the city's poorest. "I've been watching this for seven years now," she says, "and it is increasing and increasing. We're not just seeing babies born with congenital abnormalities, but very late spontaneous abortion because of congenital defects. In the past we used to see maybe one a month. Now it is two or three cases per day. I've had three cases this morning and it's only 11.20."

The price of cleaning up the radioactive mess in the Persian Gulf is enormous. It would cost "billions" even if it were feasible, says Leonard Dietz, an atomic scientist who wrote a report for the US Energy Department.

In the days that followed the retreat and defeat of Iraqi troops, thousands of coalition soldiers were on the ground among the radioactive tanks. Some picked fragments of bullets as souvenirs and wore them around their necks. "The Gulf war was the first time we saw Soviet tanks," says Chris Kornkven, who served with the US's 304th Combat Support Group. "Many of us started climbing around in them." It was also common practice among British soldiers. "We all did it," says Darren Office. "A gang of us would go out — not too far from our tanks — and have a look about. Lads larking around."

So far, only one British soldier has been tested for DU: Ray Bristow, who served with his unit on the notorious Basra Road. Bristow's test was carried out by Dr Asaf Darakovic, associate member of the American College of Physicians and professor of radiology and nuclear medicine at Georgetown University in Washington DC. He told Bristow last month that a test had revealed the level of radioactivity in his urine was 100 times greater than was safe. Dr Darakovic also told Bristow that of 24 servicemen he tested for radioactivity from the 144 New Jersey Transport and Resupply Corps, 14 out of 24 tested positive for radioactivity.

At a two-day conference held in Baghdad earlier this month to discuss the use of DU in the Gulf, there was little outside interest. The agency news reports barely warranted a line of reporting in Britain and the US. "The problem is that no one is taking this seriously," says Dr Sami-al Arajick, organiser of the conference. "They are saying it is all Iraqi propaganda. But it is a nightmare and it is not just us Iraqis who will find that out."

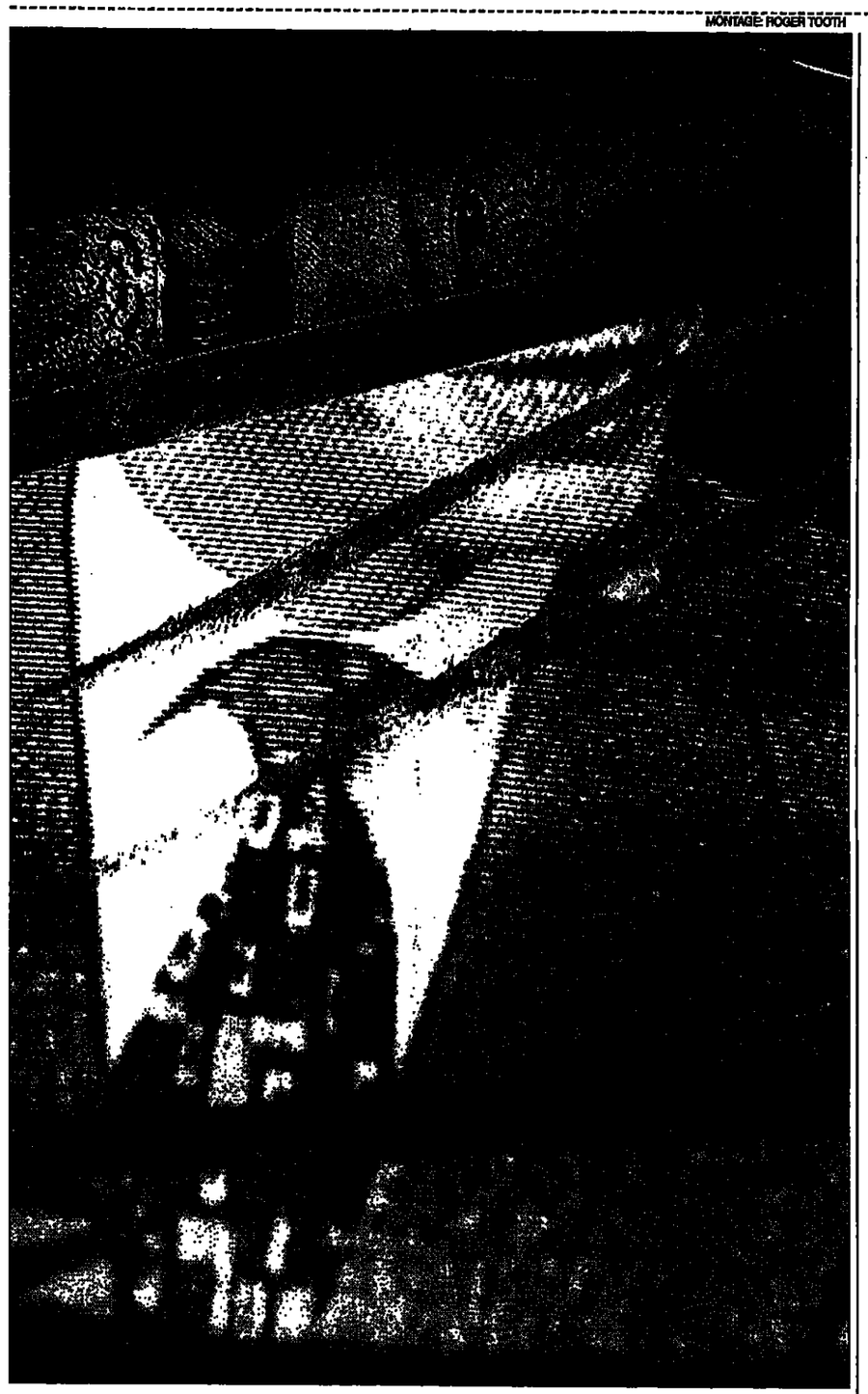
"Do your people in England know about this yet?" asks Professor Selma al-Taha. "They don't believe us, do they?"

1: Research carried at Oak Ridge National Laboratories which controversially used uranium compounds to trace the passage of calcium from the placenta to the foetus.



Deformed . . . (right) a baby being treated for a congenital head growth; and (above) a mother tends her child, who has leukaemia

MONTAGE: ROGER TOOTH



Nicola Davidson (right) hit the headlines when she was struck by Gerry Malone. Here, for the first time, she sets the record straight



Me, the European and Mr Malone

If the European had proved as popular as articles about its demise, it would still be published today. Despite innumerable articles by anyone who ever worked there, inaccuracies remain as to why the paper failed.

Peter Millar had a go in Media Guardian two weeks ago. One would expect a seasoned hack to get his facts straight. Millar refers to me "as the young blonde assistant features editor". I was assistant editor (features).

I don't really care about titles but I do care about the work I achieved. For a "young blonde" the European was one of the most interesting experiences in journalism. I managed to entice excellent writers such as John Cassidy and Jonathan Margolis to cover a variety of subjects. Our ideas were followed up in international magazines such as Time and Newsweek.

The fact is the European achieved much more than it is generally given credit for. A series of negative articles by former employees will have left most Guardian readers convinced that the European was an unmitigated disaster. The fact is that good things were starting to happen.

The unsung heroes of the European lay in the business and finance sections led by Mark Edwards and Rupert Wright. Together with great writers, they made business news colourful.

Their analysis was often ahead of the game: "The buck stops here", published in May, was the first intelligent commentary outlining why the euro would be a strong and realistic challenge to the dollar.

Sections were packaged with sassy headlines and amusing cover-lines. The excellent design team headed by John Belknap even found the time to win coveted design awards. Gerald Malone, associate editor, was right in saying the European had become "the best-kept secret in journalism".

The European failed for many reasons. Bert Hardy, the veteran chief executive of the group, was never in favour of Andrew Neil's vision of creating a competitor to the Economist. At a drinks party at The Ritz last Christmas, Hardy could be heard telling anyone who would listen that he would not have put his own money into the European. This was the man whose backing was essential to the success of the publication. He blocked the move to turn the European into a magazine, instead insisting on an unsightly compromise, a tabloid A3 newspaper.

This led to newsagents displaying the publication down with Dalton's Weekly, not next to Time and Newsweek. When the European needed a strong advertising campaign, Hardy persuaded the Barclay brothers, its owners, to revive Sunday Business and pump much-needed money into its promotion. If he had backed the European to the same extent, a rise in circulation would have followed.

So much for the format. What about the rest of the staff? Gerald Malone was not a popular choice as editor. His euro-scepticism was at odds with most of us who felt that European views needed to be treated seriously.

I had my own well-publicised run-ins with him. For the record the Malone incident runs like this: Scotland's first game in the World Cup and too much drinking. When I rejected his overtures on his return to the office, he slapped me across the back of the head.

I didn't find that acceptable. Nor did many of my colleagues. I made a formal complaint the next day, simply because I did not want to end up losing my job.

While most papers reported it in a purely factual way, The Sunday Express excelled itself with a brilliant article headlined: We reveal face of slapped woman in Tory Minister row. Superb investigative work, from a paper I used to work for and four weeks after the incident, managed to dig out a picture of me from their library and give the story a page and a half.

I was called in to see Andrew Neil, editor-in-chief. He suggested that he would speak to others in the office to gauge their opinions. He also said that Malone would write a formal apology and showed me an official warning letter he had written to Malone which was made public. The company policy on sexual harrassment was also re-issued. He asked me whether I thought that was acceptable. I did.

I was not on a mission to prove a point by simply standing up to behaviour that I found threatening. I was not on a feminist mission nor about to drag this sorry incident through the courts. Not even, as Business Age suggested, because I am too rich to bother.

Just weeks before the euro is launched seems a ridiculous time for the only pan-European publication to shut down. Run as a niche business publication on a sensible cost base with a chief executive prepared to back it, the European could prove to be a respected, profitable asset in any publishing portfolio. Any offers?

It may come as a shock to him and other users, but it is. For all the expense, the risk and the exhilaration, coke is uncool. Deeply, deeply uncool. And for a reason exquisitely mortifying: it's for losers.

For those too wasted to notice snot on their chin, too low down the food chain to get a buzz from work, too high up to handle the pressure, too nervous to do without, or just too weak to resist. "The biggest misapprehension in this business is that drugs are an aid to creativity," says AA Gill, restaurant and TV critic of the Sunday Times. "I'm a reformed junkie. I stopped drinking and taking cocaine — that's when my creative juices started. When you're on it you really believe you're producing fabulous stuff, but you're not.

"I see a lot of people in TV using cocaine, but it's the people who are lower down the chain, the wannabes. It isn't programme makers or strand editors but runners on small production companies. It helps them talk up their worth, to feel better about themselves on the smallest evidence."

Norman Mailer, not one to spurn risks, thrills or illegality, is not a fan. "There were a couple of years when marijuana meant a great deal to me, but I only took cocaine a few times and never did get to like it much. It made me feel awfully bright and much too cold of heart."

TV executive Muriel Gray's dismissal is more prosaic: "Personally I've never used the stuff, having watched too many otherwise sensible souls attempt to conduct serious conversations after partaking of a line, blissfully unaware of the six-inch suspension bridge of cloudy snot joining their nostrils to their shirt collars." Ouch.

More woundingly, even Ian Hislop, journalism's supposed enfant terrible, was scornful in a recent interview. "I found all the drugs people very boring. It wasn't a moral objection, but an aesthetic one. I thought, 'You guys are so dull.'"

After those broadsides even Tim Southwell's enthusiasm wilts. "People don't have illusions that it's a great thing to do. They know it's stupid, but it's a little taste of self-destruction for a while."

In this season of giving, why not sprinkle a bit of destruction on a user's return from the toilet, to sweeten the taste? Look into those shining eyes and test that brimming confidence by whispering one word: loser.

MediaGuardian

White Christmas

At the close of a year in which the media world was rocked by a series of cocaine scandals, **Rory Carroll** reveals the fraught life of Charlie's friends. Even Blue Peter was snared . . .

It's not polite, but look close and you can see it. The stride back from the toilets. The animated return to the conversation. Ideas tumbled out with total confidence, eyes shining. Next morning they might be red. Ask why and a twinkle may be the only reply.

Cocaine use is not a popular admission, though by all accounts it's a popular habit. Everybody's doing it or knows colleagues who are. Without it swathes of journalism, advertising, television and public relations would creak to a halt, or at least talk slower.

Parties just wouldn't be the same, brag the snorters. Rely solely on alcohol and job satisfaction for high spirits and you have a social disaster waiting to happen. Especially this time of year, with its endless run of receptions and parties. Amazing what a little powder can do for a groaning body and brain, allegedly. That's why Christmas is rush hour for dealers. And you thought Bing Crosby was referring to snow.

But this season's festive snorters have added reason to double-check the toilet door is locked, for this has been the year coke blew into the open. What the industry puts up its nose has become news.

Flip back the calendar. January: French journalists, writers and TV producers were outed as massive users by Marianne magazine. Not long after the television producer Ben Hamilton was caught snorting coke in his car while on stakeout for an investigative documentary.

August: London Burning's star John Alford appears in court charged with supplying coke to a journalist from the News of the World, just in case the public forgot it was a shameful vice needing vigilance and purging. And he used to be in Grange Hill.

September: In Getting Away With It, the story of Loaded, Tim Southwell debunked the notion that coke is rampant in parts of the industry. It's rampant everywhere.

October: Richard Bacon, 22, didn't listen to his father, who passed on a warning from a journalist friend about London's coke scene. The Blue Peter presenter snorted in the street and in a club during a 12-hour bender. He was spotted and a little birdie fluttered to the News of the World.

A scoop was in motion. Two photographers snapped him leaving Blue Peter's birthday party, ignoring his companions, Anthea Turner and Caron Keating. Suspicion turned to dread, for he was hurtling towards national disgrace and nothing could stop it. He confessed. "Blue Peter goody-goody is a cocaine-snorting sneak," thundered the headline, and everyone followed up: Six O'Clock News, News At Ten, Question Time, Newsnight, Have I Got News for You?. Bacon was fired. Lorraine Heggessey, the BBC's head of children's TV, made an excruciating apology to Blue Peter viewers about how Bacon let everyone down by taking an illegal drug, which she didn't identify.

Cue Chris Evans, outraged at the injustice. Virgin Radio listeners, and readers of papers that followed it up, were offered an insight gleaned from his time at Radio 1. Half the BBC was on coke, he claimed. In fact it was only a few days since he'd seen staffers snorting: "Now one person has been fired for using cocaine, the BBC need to get rid of half their staff. I demand now that they reinstate Richard Bacon or get rid of everyone else who takes cocaine," Evans said. "The BBC governors are the most out-of-touch people in the world. They haven't got their fingers on the pulses. I think they should help people who take cocaine get over it or control it or basically just phase it out." The Corporation declined to issue a writ.

And so to November: Punch turns the spotlight on Evans and claims his Virgin cronies are themselves intimately acquainted with the Andean coca leaf derivative. One victim was the boardroom table, smashed under the weight of people dancing, the magazine said. David Campbell, Ginger Media Group's chief executive officer, fired off a furious memo, duly leaked to Punch: "If any employee, or contractor, is discovered to be using, selling or in possession of such substances whilst at work, we will take immediate action." Translation: this Christmas, be merry, not blasted.

Anecdotes about advertisers are also legion: whooping it up in restaurants and phoning out for a delivery; parties with bowls of it; marble tops on lavatory cisterns to ease chopping; queues for toilet cubicles but no one flushing; juniors tasked with ensuring plentiful supplies on shoots; year-round sniffs that owe nothing to 'flu. "It's not just creatives. If you're out till 3am and then have to be on a shoot at six, you can't do it without something," says Marie Clarke, of Campaign.

Occasional tragedies, like GQ editor Michael VerMeulen overdosing in 1995, don't interrupt the merry-go-round. For every Magenta De Vine, the Rough Guide presenter who admitted cocaine addiction, there are a dozen who profess to be having a ball. "Everybody's taking cocaine. I don't know anybody not doing it, though I haven't had any in quite a while," insists Tim Southwell.

But does cocaine really fuel Britain's media? It's an important question. Pressure to introduce random drug testing at work has intensified since last month's survey by the Institute of Personnel and Development showed that up to 18 per cent of the workforce may be taking drugs at any one time.

Forensic Science Services, a government agency specialising in drug testing, found that one in 10 workers regularly test positive. Drink and drug abuse is estimated to cost employers £3 billion a year. A media industry crackdown could lead to a catastrophic purge of staff.

Credibility would crumble, for widespread cocaine use would expose the industry as shamelessly hypocritical and patronising. The journalists, copywriters and programme-makers who peddle cocaine shame stories in between snorts would be conning the public, deemed too unworldly to be trusted to handle drugs. Perhaps that's why so few admit usage, though denials are often deliberately undermined by a smirk, to leave room for doubt. To take coke, after all, is to suggest you have money and fun.

Gauging the extent of usage is tricky. The price has hovered around £60 a gram for the past two years, suggesting supply and demand are stable. A typical user might sniff a quarter of a gram over the weekend, according to the Institute for the Study of Drug Dependence.

Tim Gospill, health and safety officer of the NUJ, knows many users. "There aren't statistics for it but it tends to be well-paid people, those fairly high up. A lot of broadcasters — with their deadlines, they get hyped up. Same with national newspapers."

The union is against random drug testing. "What people do in their private lives is their own business. If people have a little snort at the weekend, it doesn't affect their work."

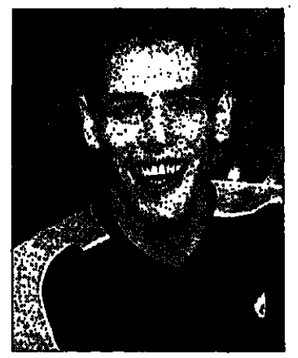
In fact Gospill goes further, suggesting employers might even encourage usage. "Media employers know better than to try random testing because so many staff will be caught. Anyway, it boosts productivity. They ought to supply staff with cocaine because then they'll work the way they want them to work — quick reflexes, hyper, hyping things up."

Higher salaries help make London the focus. Says Richard Ingrams, editor of the Oldie: "I was first made aware of this phenomenon when I started frequenting the Groucho club in the mid-eighties. I was amazed it was done so openly. No one seemed to be particularly worried there might be a police raid."

Believe the anecdotes, and consumption outside the capital is also rife. The comedian Rhona Cameron isn't joking when she speaks of the Edinburgh Festival as a drink and cocaine binge. Last year police raided the gents' at the George Hotel.

After-effects include fatigue and depression, not ameliorated by fried nasal membranes. Accidentally blowing out the structure separating the nostrils is also dispiriting. Large doses can lead to extreme agitation, anxiety, paranoia and hallucination.

"Which explains a lot about that bastard," says one journalist about her former boss, a regional tabloid editor notorious for tantrums, in between closing his office blinds. He is tipped for elevation to a vehemently anti-drug national tabloid, where his stories would have to toe the company line. Here's one he can have for free: cocaine is uncool.



Richard Bacon (above) was fired from Blue Peter after he was spotted snorting coke



'When you're on it you really believe you're producing fabulous stuff but you're not' — AA Gill (above)

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The Sabine Durrant Interview

James Hewitt Unhappily ever after

He wishes he'd died in the Gulf War and cries if he sees the photographs of Diana and himself together. Now he's fighting for the return of her stolen love letters — and he won't give up



PHOTOGRAPH: ROBIN PRICE

James Hewitt, the former lover of Diana, Princess of Wales, is not easy to pin down. Before this interview took place, there were meetings mooted and cancelled. He asked if he would be paid? (No.) Receive copy approval? (No.) He displayed all the reluctance and wariness of a man who was used to being vilified, who was just waiting once again to be called cad, bounder, love rat, perfumed poodle-faker. . . He said at one point: "Mass murderers and child abusers get a better press than I do."

When, finally, he came to the door of his overheated flat in South Kensington he was naked from the waist up. This was only to be an introductory conversation but you might have expected some sort of a carapace: a suit, if not full army uniform. But there he was, bleary-eyed and topless.

He said that, in their arrangements (the relationship began in 1987 and had "fizzled out" by 1992), he and Diana "were very clever" (apart from the odd outing to San Lorenzo, they met mainly at Kensington Palace), but they weren't clever enough. They were followed, bugged (he's Hackett man in the Squidgy tapes), photographed. "The authorities knew about it, that's how it got out. The Special Forces knew, the protection people, the Palace, the prime minister. . ."

And the press. Hewitt, who admits to being pressurised into the odd "lapse in judgment" — how much better to have whispered softly to Andrew Morton or Richard Kaye or Martin Bashir than confide in Anna "Princess in Love" Pasternak — became the tabloid's dream hate figure: he "kissed and told".

Diana's death has altered the images of others around her: Prince Charles is now the carer, sharer. But Hewitt, who reckons he was kicked out of the army six years ago not because he failed the exams to be major, but because he slept with Diana, is forever the bastard. "It's been written about so often that it sticks," he said, crumpling up his aristocratic forehead. "And it's never going to go completely, no matter how much scrubbing. . . A couple of weeks ago, I was chased by the paparazzi in Paris. It is one of the biggest and longest-lasting lies of the last decade."

Indirectly, it is also the reason why he finally agreed to this interview. Last week, he issued a writ against the solicitors who represent Diana's trustees for the return of 64 love letters which were stolen from his house in Devon in March. The letters, taken by former fiancée Anna Ferretti with *the connivance of the Mirror, were* passed to the police and on to the Palace. The Mirror, after reproducing the odd choice detail, claimed the letters were unsafe in the hands of Hewitt — ignoring the fact that he had kept them under lock and key, unshown, "uncashed", for almost a decade. Since then, nobody has been prosecuted for the theft, and the refusal to return the letters continues to throw doubt on Hewitt's honour.

He has been advised by his solicitors not to talk too much about all this, but he stutters with indignation on the subject. He has sold his house in Devon to pay for his legal costs. He has moved to London to be "in the fray". "There is absolutely no evidence and there never will be and it's just not true that I intended to publish, sell or do anything other than keep the bloody things," he said heatedly.

> Did he and Diana ever talk about marriage? 'It was what she wanted'

"Why didn't I burn them? Well, why, why, why, why don't I burn my coat? The letters were written to me at the time when I was serving in the Gulf and going to die for my country and so you know I kept them along with a variety of other letters from family and friends. Yes, I have been tempted to leave the whole thing, but the point is they were stolen from me and the principle of the thing, and the way it was done, I. . . that's all." He sounded suddenly deflated.

We had met again, an hour after our introductory session. Hewitt had put on a pale blue shirt and loafers. He smelt of Penhaligon's Royal Yacht aftershave. He and a young neighbour, Lisa, locked out with her puppy, had been drinking champagne. Hewitt has had to leave his two dogs with his mother (his lurcher misses him badly) and didn't mind when Lisa's spaniel made a puddle. "Shhh, little one," he said gently when it cried.

His flat, *which is small* enough for the sitting room to contain a strip of kitchen, has a smart sofa, lots of hunting pictures: a country house interior squashed into a two-bedroom pad. There is a drinks tray next to the kettle, and two foxes' heads mounted in the tiny hallway: "They're sort of heirlooms." Hewitt is quite proud of his knack at interior decoration. He noticed a missing foot on the sofa and sprang to protect the carpet from it with a little cup: "Well done me."

We sat in front of the television with the sound off, eating take-away Chinese. The lunchtime news was all about Operation Desert Fox. Does Hewitt wish he was there? "No," he said. "They're only dropping bombs."

Later, he said his time in the Gulf war was the happiest of his life. "It has wonderful memories for me, yuh. Fantastic to go through a situation like that, the mother of all wars, well it might have been. . . but then to come back, it was an anti-climax really. When I went to the Gulf I was hoping that I would die there, actually. It's a ghastly thing to say but that rather romantic notion of dying in battle. . . So much nicer than all the tabloid mess that one's had to endure."

It was his decision to go abroad — first to Germany, then on to the desert — which was, he said, behind Diana's reference to him in the Panorama interview. ("Yes, I adored him. Yes, I was in love with him. But I was very let down.") "She needed me and I wasn't there. Yes, I did let her down. I could have not gone, that was the whole point. But it was a good career move. . ."

By the time he got back the relationship had ended: "There were others after me." They carried on being friends, but any pain he felt was not helped by seeing her image wherever he went. "Every time you turn on the television. . . *Yesterday*, I saw her on it yesterday." Hewitt spoke bombastically some of the time, as if determined to sound on top of things. But when asked what he felt like when he looked at old photographs of them together — the polo match picture, for example — he said quietly, "Don't, you'll make me cry."

He was in Marbella, on holiday, when Diana was killed. "We were going to have brunch on the beach and then I was going to take everyone to a bullfight. I'd even bought the tickets. And I thought, shall I listen to my messages? No, I won't have any. Oh, I'd better just in case. So I dialled my voicemail and it said 15 messages; 15 on a Sunday. . . And that's how I found out."

He stared at the TV screen. "What was amazing was in the previous week, all the cheap tabloids they'd been slating her, they'd been ghastly, and then on the Monday they were saying we've lost a saint. There's no honour, no principle. They're just money-grabbing little shits."

Hewitt was brought up for the Army. There are pictures of his grandfather and his father in uniform on his desk. He was the only son in three children, went to Sandhurst. What is he without his military prospects? Somewhat bitterly, he calls himself "a pensioner", stuck in "employment nothingness", though he does have investments, mainly in property. A golf driving range and a riding school have both failed to get off the ground. He is currently importing *maca*, a food supplement from Peru which he says has the same properties as ginseng or Viagra. "I've had to stop taking it," he said, crossing his legs. He did a Terry-Thomas-meets-sexy-nurse impression.

He drinks a bit, though he says he's "on top of the situation". He has trouble sleeping and wakes at 4am, "no matter how much or little I've drunk or what tablets. . . So you go for a run and try to tire yourself out physically." He is not in a relationship. He has been photographed with page three models and labelled a "womaniser". "I'm quite honest with them. I like women. I like men, too, but. . ."

Lisa, playing with the dog, said she thought women threw themselves at him. "I never intend to have messy relationships," Hewitt continued. "That's probably one reason why I don't want to have a proper relationship because I don't want to have the responsibility of it ending. Pathetic, that. But it's a thought that goes through your mind." Did he and Diana ever talk about marriage? "It was what she wanted, yes."

"Look," he said suddenly. "I've never had any designs on being a public figure and it's completely abhorrent to me. But you can't pretend it's not there. You've got to face up and cope with the situation, which is difficult if you've never had any training. I mean, I'm not an MP. I'm not a royal. I'm not a film star. I'm no one. I'm just an army officer. Or was. I'm not even that now. I think I've done a lot wrong. It would have been better never to have said anything, but I think I've paid for my mistakes. Time served, you know? People say, why don't you go and live in Spain? Well, I'm buggered if I'm going to do that. I did try and shut up and lead a quiet life but it doesn't happen like that. I want to be the architect of my own future. I've got a fighting spirit and I'm not going to let this go, that's all. Win or lose, I don't mind, as long as I'm fighting."

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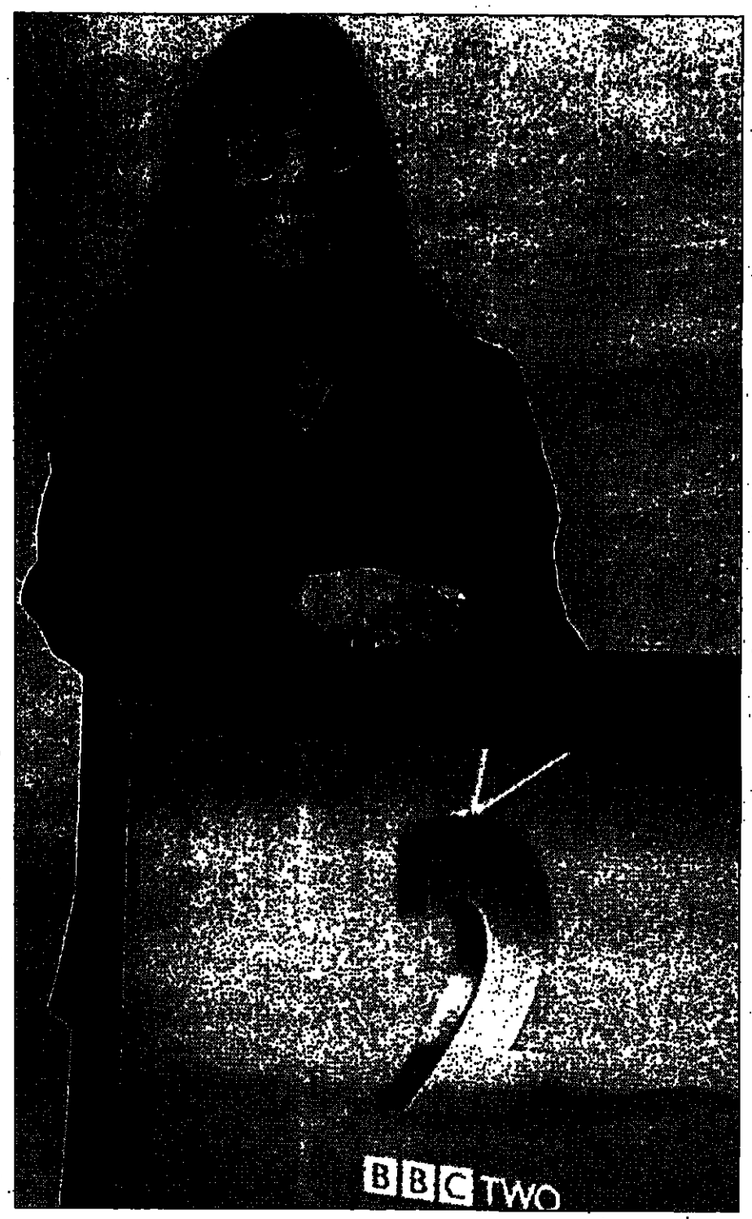
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Two's company ... the appointment of Jane Root has trampled on the aspirations of other more conventional BBC careerists
PHOTOGRAPH: MARTIN ARGLES

tor of television (he joined Channel 4 in spring 1997) two weeks after she arrived. Jackson met Root in the formative stages of both of their careers in the early 1980s. They became, and remain, firm friends and allies. Media obsessives, they seem to live for television.

A self-confessed "Essex Girl", from a family who left the East End to better themselves, Root was brought up in Canvey Island, where her father "imported what he called 'grot' and owned a grot shop". This Del Trotter-ish background, she believes, explains two things about her. "I'm more 'BBC1' than people expect from the programmes [indy company] Wall to Wall made when I was there, and when your parents are always working in shops you can't help but be entrepreneurial."

As a Canvey Island teenager, "you were doing well if you became a secretary. My family were really into TV and films and talked about them a lot, but there was absolutely no sense that you might ever work there." After school she went to the London College of Printing before studying international relations at Sussex University. She then freelanced and worked for the British Film Institute, where she penned a study of the way people watch television, which led to the acclaimed 1986 Channel 4 series Open The Box produced by Jackson. They then made Channel 4's Media Show together. But while he was wooed to the BBC by Alan Yentob and Michael Grade, Root set up the production company Wall to Wall with Alex Graham.

So established had Wall to Wall become, with around 60 staff, that when journalists first caught wind that Root had been asked to join the BBC last year, it was dismissed as unbelievable at a time when a lot of talented producers were going in the opposite direction.

She has said that she found it "fantastically hard" to disentangle herself — but that she'd decided on a "big life change". Shortly after she joined in 1997 she said: "I am amazed at myself. But if I hadn't done something different [then] I never would. I was fascinated to learn more about schedules, about broadcasting. Independents are kept on the margins, excluded, it was like playing darts blindfolded, not knowing how your work fits into the bigger picture."

Her appointment was designed to signal a new deal — that for the first time someone who really understood the independent sector was strategically placed at the centre, with direct access to channel controllers.

This has not defused the current PACT campaign for independent producers to get fairer treatment over programme rights from the BBC, one they hope that the Office of Fair Trading will take up in the New Year.

But it has arguably worked well for the BBC, and for viewers. Root's impact is hard to isolate, as the head of the ICG cannot directly commission, but she played a key part in rushing Victoria Wood's Dinner Ladies on to BBC1, and made sure that Tony Garnett, after the tensions surrounding the failure to make a third series of This Life, was happy to continue working with BBC2.

BBC2, with its strong audience share (11.2 per cent this year, up on 10.9 per cent a year ago) is in good shape. After concentrating on BBC1, Mal Young is about to turn his attention to serving BBC2's needs. Next year's big drama, Births, Marriages and Deaths, is expected to have as powerful an impact as The Cops. One of the last acts of out-going controller Mark Thompson was to commission an adaptation of Mervyn Peake's Gormenghast.

But it's clear that drama budgets are strained. And there are potential frustrations for an ambitious executive: much of the airtime is already accounted for, with schedule fixtures such as Newsnight. The annual budget of £372 million sounds large, but little of it is free for new programming. It is also about to be tested by Jackson's now lavishly resourced Channel 4, whose revival at the cutting edge of British television is under way.

Root will need all of her collaborative skills to keep BBC2 moving forward.

Additional reporting by John Dugdale

Executive roles

Jenny Abramsky
Director of radio. Rose via editing PM, World at One and Today to join Brit's first radio news supremo, ruining "Soul Fm" Cold War service's dumpy rain for triumph as launch controller of Radio 5 Live. Then moved on to running continuous news.

Jane Bennett
Worked on Newsnight and Panorama before editing Antenna and Horizon. Success in revamping BBC Science as an expensive programme, with output ranging from The Human Body to Animal Doctor, led to her succeeding Alan Yentob last year as director of production.


Jana Bennett ... production chief

Sue Farr
Director of marketing at Granada, initially at Yorkshire Tyne Tees Television, with an MBA from Henley, responsible for marketing TV and radio networks, previously promoted radio marketing in 1990-91 period when new regulations ing of Radio 1 and 5 Live launch.

Patricia Hodgson
Director of policy and planning since 1993, which gives her a seat on the BBC's 10-strong Executive Committee. Worked on education programmes, then rose through the ranks in the eighties and nineties.

Diary

Crass insensitivity reigns at the UK Press Gazette, which has been plugging its British Press Awards. The advert for Columnist of the Year features a picture of Ruth Picardie, the Observer columnist, who, the advert says, "faced her tragically early death with an exemplary fortitude reflected in a series of moving and memorable articles". Underneath, some bright spark has written the pay-off line: "This could be you!" A little more thought, a little less salesmanship, wouldn't go amiss.

The media bunker, rather oddly, is backing John Major to be Radio 4's Person of the Millennium. The reason is enough to chill the bones of the Today programme, which has launched the listeners' poll and is not unused to listeners rigging the vote. Undersurrents, the media pressure group, has launched a campaign to get Major the award as he "has no personality whatsoever". It has usefully given Today's e-mail address (today@bbc.co.uk) to members to encourage them to vote. We, of course, would never do that.

Clever Clare Balding, sports writer at the London Evening Standard. She breaks a big story about a deal involving champion jockey Kieren Fallon and a trainer. Balding gets a nice big "exclusive" byline. And the trainer? A chap called Ian Balding. Yep, her dad.

So, which of those money-mad media conglomerates makes the most profit per employee? Murdoch's BSkyB or News International? Or how about Lord Hollick's United News and Media or David Montgomery and Mirror Group? No, it's that defender of public service broadcasting and supposedly less commercial animal, Channel 4. A Zenith Media report reveals that C4 makes £192,000 per employee, compared to a paltry £59,000 for BSkyB.

And while we're talking about Zenith, can it be true that executive Adam Smith goes by the title Head of Knowledge Management? Yes, we're afraid it is. Merry Christmas.

MediaGuardian

On the press

Roy Greenslade



Spied in the papers

Sure, the bombardment of Iraq and the downfall of President Clinton were last week's big news and the papers gave them due prominence. But there is nothing like a story about one of its own to quicken Fleet Street's pulse. So there was plenty of space devoted to the saga of the editor said to have been on MI6's payroll.

The story first emerged in an interview with the former MI6 officer Richard Tomlinson, in the 50,000-circulation Sunday Business on October 11. In an article about the role of the secret service in helping British companies win business abroad, there was a throwaway remark about "one national newspaper editor" having been "recruited as a paid MI6 agent". Even so, this astonishing allegation might never gave gained a wider audience but for the Treasury Solicitor deciding to haul in editor Jeff Randall for questioning.

Randall, unaware he had broken an injunction by publishing Tomlinson's words, refused to say whether Tomlinson had named the editor, let alone who it might be. By now the rest of the press, especially that community of journalists who specialise in spies and spooks, were alerted to the fact that there might be a genuine story.

First into the fray was the Times's defence editor, Michael Evans, with a front page piece on December 12, ostensibly about Tomlinson facing arrest for a possible breach of the Official Secrets Act. The prominent sub-heading gave away the paper's real reason for publishing: "National newspaper editor linked to allegations".

Given that there are only 18 editors, it was guaranteed to start a witch-hunt. Discounting tabloid editors, it left nine candidates.

Initially, at least two reporters and one editor believed the culprit was the Times's Peter Stothard. The logic was that by publishing first he was trying to deflect attention from himself.

By Monday the whisperers were suddenly certain of their man, regardless of whether Tomlinson did or did not tell them and ignoring whether he may or may not be lying: the Sunday Telegraph's Dominic Lawson. How, though, could his name be published, given the injunction and the existence of the law of libel?

With politicians beginning to take an interest, it didn't take a minute for the most experienced hacks to find a ploy. Had not Anthony Blunt been exposed as a spy 19 years ago when an MP, prompted by a journalist, asked a question in the Commons under the cloak of Parliamentary privilege?

By chance two Labour MPs, unaware of each other's interest, were both intrigued by the Tomlinson tale. George Galloway decided to put down an early day motion but Brian Sedgemore got in first, by inserting the allegation about Lawson in a speech during a Wednesday morning debate about the Freedom of Information Act.

One reporter was in the press gallery, the Press Association's Jackie Storer, and that was enough. After a slight delay while she made some checks, the story hit newspaper screens at lunchtime. Lawson became the target.

As Peregrine Worsthorne noted in yesterday's Independent on Sunday: "To say the knives were out for Dominic... would be an understatement. Not only were they out, but sharpened, poisoned and pointed as well."

The Times and the Guardian



Free agent? Dominic Lawson

immediately seized on the oddity of two articles published in the Spectator when Lawson was editor between 1990 and 1995.

Bylined "Kenneth Roberts, who works for the UN forces in Bosnia", both papers claimed he was, in fact, an MI6 officer.

Much more preposterous was an Express front-page piece that began by pointing out that Lawson had been a great friend of Princess Diana and went on to talk about Tomlinson's fantastical theories about MI6 being implicated in Diana's death.

Lawson's rapid rebuttal, saying "I am not and never have been an agent either paid or unpaid of MI6 or any other government agency", made no difference to the speculation. Nor, indeed, did an unprecedented Foreign Office denial. Again, it was the Times that made the running. Having published a leading article headlined "Agent Editor", which called on MPs to investigate the claims, it followed the next day with a piece claiming Lawson would face "protracted parliamentary scrutiny". This could only serve to place Lawson under yet greater suspicion, though no new evidence had come to light.

On Saturday, the Times revealed that its inquiries into the mysterious Kenneth Roberts had been thwarted by the threat of a D-notice. They had evidently discovered the man's real name, supposedly through investigations of the book ledger at the Spectator, but could not publish it.

Throughout the week Lawson kept his counsel but he finally replied to his critics in yesterday's Sunday Telegraph. Though lighthearted in tone, his underlying anger was evident. He agreed, on reflection, that the Times might be right in saying that Roberts was, after all, an MI6 agent, though he hadn't realised at the time.

But he added triumphantly that he recalled asking "Roberts" if he had written pseudonymously for any other publication. Yes, he replied, the Times.

He concluded by pointing out his central difficulty, that "it is impossible to prove a negative". A denial isn't, in such circumstances, accepted as such. But he underlined his previous one with another: "I have never worked for the intelligence services. The only sort of agent I could ever be is a free one."

Whether this will do the trick is uncertain. In the Observer, former Guardian editor Peter Preston pointed out that Lawson may not be believed until "an independent inquirer" has examined the case.

Like many journalists at the Guardian, he cannot forgive Lawson for the Spectator story that led to the resignation of Richard Gott, the Guardian's respected literary editor. Soviet double agent Oleg Gordievsky alleged in an interview that Gott was an "agent of influence" paid by the KGB.

Though Gott disputed the substantive allegations, he did admit having accepted trips paid for by the Russians without the editor's knowledge. For this reason he resigned. Lawson has always maintained that Gordievsky spoke the truth.

Apart from the interview itself, its timing was crucial — at a time when the Guardian was fighting a battle with Tory minister Jonathan Aitken over payment for his stay in the Ritz hotel — and was obviously timed to embarrass the paper, if not undermine its credibility.

That aside, it doesn't prove Lawson was a spy. It was a typical piece of vicious internecine journalistic mischief for which he, like many other editors, is renowned.

Perhaps the whole affair was put into perspective in yesterday's Sunday Times in an article headlined "MI6 used Spectator as cover story". Way down the story, after further innuendo, the writers note: "It is understood that Tomlinson never claimed to have any hard proof that Lawson was a paid agent. It is understood that he now accepts that the claim was 'hearsay' and based on conversations with colleagues."

So a week's headlines come down to this. The man who started it all now says he has no proof. What a farce.

As the new controller of BBC2, Jane Root is the latest powerful female to bring a distinctly unmasculine feel to Auntie's executive bureaucracy. **Maggie Brown** traces her rise

Women take root

The champagne flowed on Thursday as an impromptu lunchtime party began in Jane Root's office. At 9.30pm the night before, this hard-working, deceptively informal woman had been called to Sir John Birt's office, and told by him the coveted role of controller of BBC2 was hers. "It's the sort of job you dream about, rather than expect," she says modestly.

And, also, a little bit of history has been made. Whatever BBC executives say about her gender not coming into it, which it didn't, it does nevertheless matter that she is a woman and the first to control one of the BBC's major channels.

For all its equality targets, the corporation has been strangely slow in allowing women into the best creative jobs. And the gender and personality of the controller also matter for viewers, too. Those executives and producers lower down the line, who actually make the programmes, are all affected by the attitudes and outlook of the controller.

There is something more going on here. Root is the latest in a line of powerful female executives who are giving a distinctly unmasculine feel to parts of the behemoth that is the BBC's executive bureaucracy. Jenny Abramsky has recently been appointed director of radio after a time in the wilderness of continuous news. Jana Bennett is director of production, succeeding Alan Yentob, while Sue Farr is director of marketing and communications.

Possibly least known but most influential is Patricia Hodgson who, as director of policy and planning since 1993, is one of only two women on the BBC's executive committee. Not exactly a revolution but a notable development nonetheless.

Root is a fresh face, an outsider, who joined the BBC just 20 months ago, and has taken a very modern entrepreneurial route, entirely of her own making, to the top. Her appointment tramples on the aspirations of other more conventional BBC careerists, scemingly more experienced. Oxbridge she's not.

So, attending her party were the people she is closest to, a meritocracy who form a new kind of power group centred on the BBC. Her campaign manager, as he likes to call himself, was Mal Young, the down-to-earth Liverpudlian and ex-Brookside producer who joined the BBC a year ago as head of drama series.

Root, a friend, was, he says, influential in persuading him to join the BBC. She has compared the BBC to an inward-looking "medieval village", where, instead of rival channels, "other people's challenges are all other BBC departments". But, despite the worst fears of her friends and family, she finds the reformed, Birtist organisation congenial, comparing the cultural shift he has pushed through in "getting rid of old thinking" to the Labour Party. Birt, in turn, thinks she is "great".

Another Root supporter, Peter Salmon, the populist and highly competitive controller of BBC1, also arrived to give a congratulatory hug. The two controllers must have a close working relationship based on trust — they increasingly collaborate, as hits nurtured on BBC2 (most recently Changing Rooms and Ground Force) are switched to BBC1.

Also in the sixth-floor room at Television Centre in west London were acclaimed drama producer Tony Garnett, whose This Life and The Cops have added critical lustre to BBC2, and Jeremy Mills, the ex-BBC pioneer of docu-soaps, who now runs his own rapidly expanding company, Lion TV, largely employing former BBC talent. As head of the beefed-up Independent Commissioning Group (ICG) — designed to ensure the BBC did not bungle promising offers from indy producers — Root has been a key link for operators like them.

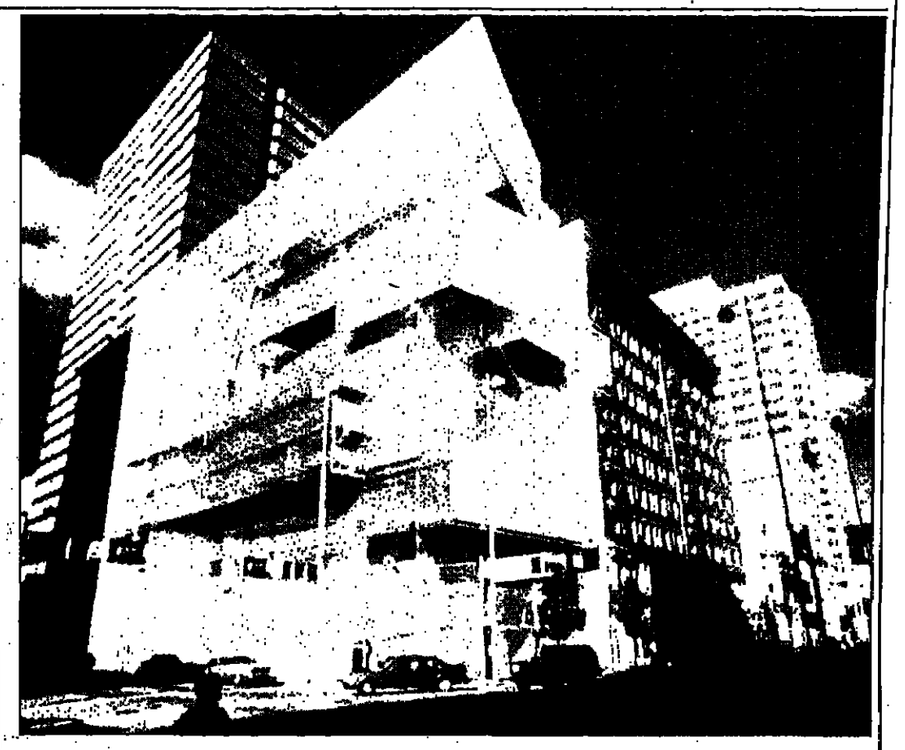
So, how did Jane Root take root at the BBC? And is she up to the job? The irony is that the key person behind her recruitment was Michael Jackson, now chief executive of Channel 4, the most direct rival to BBC2, but also a strong candidate to be the next director general of the BBC.

The joke they share is that he spent six years trying to persuade her to join the BBC, only to quit as director of programmes after she had finally agreed.

Arts

If Zaha can do this for Cincinnati, why don't we get her to save the South Bank?

Jonathan Glancey on an architectural superstar





Haddid's seductive design for the Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati (left) should get the South Bank wellehs thinking.

She's a pussy cat really, Zaha Hadid. Well, she was last week at the Hayward Gallery on London's South Bank, purring and being as warm and as funny as this brilliant architect can be to anyone who takes her as seriously as she is taken virtually everywhere — everywhere, that is, outside her adopted country, Britain.

Hadid had every right to feel pleased last week. Surrounded by supporters, she presented seductive plans, models and computer-generated walk-throughs of her first major building, the Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati. This scintillating design (a true snip at $27.5million) goes on site next autumn and is due to open two years later.

This is good news and makes up for the extraordinarily shabby way in which Hadid has been treated at home. A woman and a feisty one at that, formidably intelligent, witty, stylish and foreign, as an architect she has always had just about everything going against her. A woman architect ought, by custom, to be prim, neat and efficient, a force behind the scenes sporting a short, geometric haircut and preppy clothes. She should be a modern blue-stocking, with a nice, if stern smile, and should never, ever rock the boat.

Hadid of course famously rocked the boat with her sensational design for the Cardiff Bay Opera House which was equally famously shafted by some nasty little chauvinists (national and sexual) in South Wales and the Millennium Commission. The line I hear most often since this shameful fiasco, whereby Britain lost one of the finest new buildings it was likely to have, is that it wasn't such a good thing after all, was it (old boy)? And (ha, ha) Ms Hadid's designs are a bit rum, all things weighed and considered, aren't they?

Poppycock. Whatever anyone thought of Hadid's challenging style of architecture, she was teamed up in Cardiff with a number of the world's finest experts in structure, acoustics and services. It's taken a gung-ho, mid-west US town to prove that Hadid has what it takes. She will do for Cincinnati what she could have done for Cardiff: give it a building of invention, integrity, glamour and world-class design.

Good luck to Cincinnati and the Contemporary Arts Center. Good luck to Charles Desmarais, director of the CAC and his ebullient team. "Zaha Hadid," he said at the Hayward do, "understands contemporary art and is excited by it. Out of that excitement and understanding, she has designed a building that is more than a series of boxes into which you just drop art objects. She has created spaces that heighten our engagement with art — spaces that let energy flow back and forth between the city and the museum, spaces that give artists something to push against when they make or install their work."

It was difficult to listen to these words, however, and to look at Hadid's models and drawings, in the concrete confines of the Hayward Gallery. Why? Because, the Hayward, a special gallery, celebrating its 30th anniversary this year, is under threat of demolition. If it goes, Hadid's Cincinnati project will be the phoenix rising from its rubble.

My concern was this: plans for the reconstruction of the cultural complex we know as the South Bank, perhaps the most important of its kind in Britain, were announced in a shadowy way last week. The announcement from the South Bank Centre made no mention of the sort of architecture or standards of design it aspired to or would promote. And, yet, here was one of the most inspiring architects of our times presenting a brilliant new arts museum for Cincinnati, Ohio, in the doomed Hayward Gallery.

What an opportunity missed. Imagine if Hadid, and a team of equally imaginative architectural and planning talents, had been able to announce, on the same day a new injection of design intelligence and vigour into the South Bank. Hadid is exactly the sort of architect who should be involved in the regeneration of the South Bank.

There have been so many plans for the South Bank over the past 15 years that they blur unsatisfactorily into one another. What we should be thankful for is that none of them has been realised. The earlier plans of the eighties were very much of their time, rooted in a world in which commerce was to lead culture and when there was much talk of art galleries and museums being part of speculative retail and commercial development.

Those with unfashionably long memories will recall that even the extension of the National Gallery was, at one inglorious moment, to have been sited almost as an afterthought on top of a new office block promoted by Nigel Broakes and Trafalgar House. That was the eighties for you, when too many desperate people in the arts world (many of whom should have known better) were blinded by the money boys. The commercially-driven schemes for the South Bank were deeply unsatisfactory. The last and much trumpeted project for the rebirth of the South Bank was Richard Rogers' "glass wave" — a crystal tide that would have lapped over the existing buildings and offered visitors the climate of Bordeaux most of the year round.

The strategy announced last week considers the demolition of the Hayward Gallery, Queen Elizabeth Hall and Purcell Room and their replacement by new buildings alongside a much improved British Film Theatre, new walkways, gardens, restaurants and so on. A "masterplanner" will be appointed to push the scheme along in the new year and the South Bank Centre, under its new chairman, Elliott Bernerd, a property developer, promises to hold competitions for the design of new buildings on the site.

This may not be the right thing to do. The existing concrete buildings, still derided by those who refuse to look at them dispassionately, have very slowly been working their way into the affection of artists and the public. The Hayward Gallery (LCC/GLC Architect's department), in particular, was as radical in its day as Hadid's design for Cincinnati. Now, anyone who doesn't like the Hayward will smirk here and think, hard luck Cincinnati. Anyone who sees the point in a building that has been brought to life by excellent exhibitions and intelligent curatorship over the past decade will think quite differently. What the South Bank needs more than anything else is the talent of designers, from whatever specialist field, who will have the patience and modesty to think it through as all of a piece. There is so much wasted or poorly used space here. An imaginative team could thread new life through and between the existing buildings without the need for expensive demolition and the sort of major urban upheaval that will, almost inevitably, drag on past its public tolerance date.

There is, of course, the Jubilee Gardens site to build on anew and this is where the South Bank could invest in a superb new structure every bit as radical as Hadid's Cincinnati Contemporary Arts Center. More importantly, the right team appointed here would aim to create those very "spaces that let energy flow back and forth between the city (and the South Bank)", as evoked by Charles Desmarais when he welcomed Zaha Hadid's design at the Hayward last week.

We are learning more and more — and the up-and-coming Tate Gallery of Modern Art at Bankside and the new works at the British Museum should prove to be shining examples — to connect the world of art galleries and museums not to raw commerce alone, but to the life of the cities they adorn. The Tate is a major factor in the redevelopment of shabby old Southwark, becoming less shabby by the month. Hadid's US adventure is as much about connecting the world of contemporary arts to that of downtown Cincinnati as it is about the shaping of a special building. Any new development on the South Bank should be about connections, between past and future, north and south banks of the River Thames, of the South Bank and its hinterland and, most importantly, of the world of the arts with that of their host city and the millions of visitors who pour through these precincts in any one year.

Perhaps, in the autumn of 2001, Zaha Hadid or her equivalent will be able to present an utterly convincing "masterplan" for the South Bank, London in the Contemporary Arts Center, Cincinnati. We really mustn't aim for any lower standard or hope for any better occasion than this.

Women

The age of dissent

Michele Hanson



Glad tidings

At last Rosemary is to spend Christmas in London. She can't afford to go to her luxury cottage in Cornwall and is stuck here with us. We'd like to combine, have Christmas together, but will our families agree?

My mother is not too keen. She has shared Christmas lunch once before and it was ruined because OTHER PEOPLE overcooked the sprouts and we all had to behave properly at the table instead of collapsing halfway through dinner on to the sofa in a slobby way.

Daughter's view of the festive period is not as sour as my mother's. She feels an influx of cheery neighbours will diffuse tension and dullness in our house. And she has realised that we lack something vital in our home. "We need Christians for a proper Christmas," says she strictly and Rosemary's family fit the bill.

But will they want to come? So far, they are split 50-50. Rosemary and one daughter say yes, but the son and other daughter are not so sure. And who can blame them? Christmas is often tempestuous in our house. People stamp off into their rooms in a temper, or won't finish dinner, or don't like their presents, or don't say thank you in quite the right way, or the dog eats too many turkey snacks and vomits. Or we all run sobbing to the houses of various friends and neighbours, wondering how they manage to be nice to each other.

Rosemary does have reservations. She's had one meal in our house and had to leave before pudding. "You don't lay the table properly," said she. "You don't stay sitting down, any of you."

But hopefully this year will be different. "I make very good brandy butter," says Rosemary, "and my baby boy wants prawn cocktail for starters, and then we can play charades!" Perhaps it isn't such a good idea after all.

BBC

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Madonna

Are singers the new feminist icons? **Lucy O'Brien** reports

Rock 'n' role

In the US, they call it the Third Wave — *a new feminism for a* new generation. It is fuelled by popular culture in general and music in particular, and its icons are women with the right attitude, the right looks and a microphone.

In the seventies, feminists were women who read books: for the line on pornography, they went to Andrea Dworkin; for new language, they read Mary Daly's Gyn/Ecology; for a back-to-basics depth charge, it was Germaine Greer's The Female Eunuch. "Early feminism," says the American academic Camille Paglia, "was text-driven. There were all kinds of theoretical polemicists people had to read and keep up on."

While the late seventies feminist scene was led by academics, women in rock, like Chrissie Hynde, Debbie Harry and Patti Smith, were holding crowds spellbound. And doing so with passion and attitude. They inspired a generation. But they were on their own, exceptions to the rule, and were wary of being seen as role models.

"It's not nice to feel that people are looking to you for answers," Hynde says. "I have no answers. I'm just happy if I've encouraged anyone to get on and do what they want to do."

Many female artists, including Shirley Manson and Courtney Love, cite Hynde as a major influence. As Paglia opines: "She's a tough broad, the ultimate role model." She's a respected female musician in a band of men whose advice to up-and-comers is: "Don't think that sticking your boobs out and trying to look fuckable will help. You're in a rock 'n' roll band; it's not fuck me, it's fuck you!"

The reason rock has become so powerful for new feminism, though, is not just because of the tough broads. It's a medium in which women can be sexual, sensual and vulnerable as well as aggressive. *Madonna, for instance, has become* what Rolling Stone writer Gerri Hirshey calls "a towering monument to possibility". There is now a twenty-something generation for whom Madonna has been a constant presence. In fact, rather than talking about feminism and post-feminism, you could say pre- and post-Madonna. "For 20 years, you had a cleavage between rock 'n' roll and mainstream feminism. That's only now been healed, thanks to Madonna having closed the gap," Paglia states.

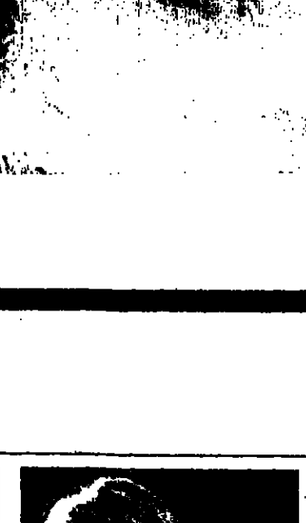
Madonna's sense of parody and unashamed sexual expression subverted the stereotypes that preceded her. She fired up thousands of young women and it was a stance that was to endure. "When I started, I got a lot of attention because I was aggressive, strident. People liked that," says Shirley Manson, lead vocalist with Garbage. With her strange stage presence, lush lips and quietly boiling intelligence, she is the kind of woman many girls would like to be. Along with artists such as Courtney Love, Tori Amos, Alanis Morissette and Skin, fearless frontwoman of Skunk Anansie, Manson has become a late nineties feminist hero.

"Feminists," Paglia says, "should be concerned about the personalities in rock 'n' roll because they will be the primary means by which young women get the feminist message." Pratibha Parmar, producer/director of tomorrow's Channel 4 documentary Righteous Babes, says young women are indeed finding their new feminist role models in rock music, "as a way of making sense of their own experience". And what they see, says New York cultural critic Cathay Che, are women who "push the frontiers of what it means to be female".

It is significant, then, that it is only in the past decade that female rock stars have begun to tackle the darker side of women's lives: issues such as domestic violence, sexual abuse and rape, which were long considered taboo in mainstream pop. Sinead O'Connor, for example, talked about the degree to which the Catholic church was complicit in child abuse when she tore up a photo of the Pope on TV in 1992. "My experience of child abuse was the furnace that drove me into the public arena," she recalls. "That's what I was writing about."

Tori Amos sang of her rape experience in Me And A Gun. Astonished by the amount of letters she received from girls who'd been through a similar trauma, she got her record company to fund a national helpline for survivors of rape, abuse and incest.

Singer/songwriter Ani DiFranco *sings wry,* funky songs about abortion, queer sexuality and menstruation, and runs her own record label, Righteous Babe, in upstate New York. Ten years ago, she would have been relegated to the sidelines as an acoustic feminist loony. Now she is on the cover of music glossies like Spin.


Skin of Skunk Anansie

Shirley Manson of Garbage

She says: "When I first started to get out there, people thought: militant, angry, man-hating, puppy-eating feminist. Yikes! Now it's different. There's the industry hype of chick singers in rock, plus a lot of female-informed rock out there. People are getting more used to the idea of the girl with the big mouth," DiFranco says and laughs.

Inevitably, women's self-assertion *has now become a marketable com*modity. Witness Spice Girl Power, considered by many to be one of the biggest scams of the mid-nineties. "I don't see how wearing a bra and your knickers on the front cover of a magazine, with your breasts stuck up with your Wonderbra, holding up a peace sign and a pout, is *anything* to do with female equality," says a scathing Shirley Manson. Women's achievement, Ani DiFranco adds, has been relegated by Girl Power to "a meaningless bumper sticker".

Ironically, Girl Power is a sanitised version of the radical yet short-lived Riot Grrl movement, ninetics daughter of punk. Riot Grrl inspired women to take up guitars, to pile-drive their anger into music. It had an industrious fanzine network reflecting a new kind of diverse feminism. It bred in Courtney Love a rock heroine with a jagged edge, a performer who combines the strength of Riot Grrl with the sexual subversion of Madonna. Female artists have pushed through into previously hallowed male areas, taking women fans with them.

Saffron, for instance, lead singer with techno rockers Republica, delights in the gang of female stage-divers at their gigs. "They run and leap into the audience. I wish it had been like that when I was younger. There are a lot more girls going to gigs. They're at the front, not at the back with their boyfriend. The front."

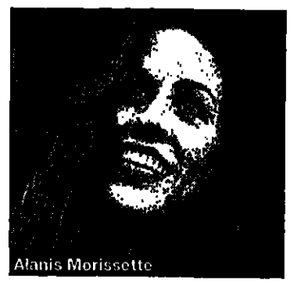
Even though rock performers fight shy of categorising themselves, many are living definitions of feminism. "People talk about the *issue* of abortion or the *issue* of queer sexuality. But to me they are not issues. This is my *life*," DiFranco concludes. "And when a whole bunch of women say, wow, thanks for saying that, me too, that in turn makes me feel I exist. OK — you *too and you too. There you go!* I must be an actual person in the actual world."

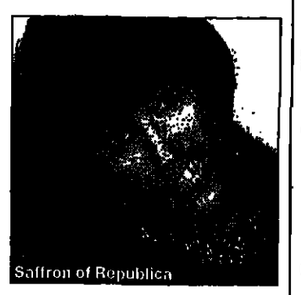
Lucy O'Brien is associate producer of Righteous Babes, which is on Channel 4 tomorrow night.


Tori Amos


Sinead O'Connor


Ani DiFranco


Alanis Morissette


Saffron of Republica

Courtney Love

Imagine Mary had suffered post-natal depression after giving birth to Jesus. Would there have been no room at the mother and baby unit? **Sam Hart** reveals the crisis in care for new mothers

Blue for a boy, blue for a girl

The birth of her baby is, Joanna Brown says, "a complete blur". The nursery nurse remembers almost nothing of the days that followed. What she does remember is almost too painful. Her thoughts bordered on the psychotic — "I thought I was going to die and was convinced my baby was dead already" — and her *almost total inability to sleep* left her too exhausted to hold her baby.

Brown's amnesia and insomnia were caused by a severe bout of post-natal depression. She expected specialist care and help to bond with her new-born daughter. Instead, she spent six weeks on the general ward of her local psychiatric unit, separated from her baby. "They called it a mother and baby unit, but it was just three rooms stuck at the bottom of the psychiatric wing," she explains. "Alice was locked away from me in the room next door. I could see her through the glass but couldn't touch her. If she cried, I had to hunt for a member of staff to unlock the door."

Around 10 per cent of all deliveries in the UK result in post-natal depression (PND). *This can mean* anything from mild baby blues to severe puerperal psychosis, involving mania and delusions. There are no official figures, but a significant minority of these cases are hospitalised. And all too often, so-called mother and baby units are crammed on to mixed-sex psychiatric wards.

"I had to share the bathroom and toilet with male patients," Brown says. "I was the only one on the ward with post-natal depression."

It is estimated that only two in 1,000 women suffering from post-natal depression need to be hospitalised. Experts agree that such severe cases should be admitted to specialist units, such as the Queen's Medical Centre in Nottingham. However, only five such units exist in Britain — and only 25 per cent of the country has access to them.

Sarah Franklin, a 28-year-old hairdresser, was admitted to a psychiatric hospital for a severe bout of post-natal depression five years ago. "There were bars on the windows like a prison," she says, "and the staff didn't understand my condition: the other patients were manic depressives and schizophrenics."

Lack of space in local mother and baby units meant that Franklin, too, *was separated from her daughter* — a move experts believe can be damaging. "Except in rare circumstances, no mother should ever be separated from her baby," says Dr Margaret Oates, consultant psychiatrist at Queen's. "It tends to prolong the illness and women need to establish relationships and mothering skills as soon as possible."

Joanna Brown agrees. "Not having access to my daughter shook my confidence. I had a lot of experience with children, but I could barely give Alice a bottle."

Sarah Franklin was eventually moved to a hospital that had room for her baby, but was appalled by the treatment she received. "They said they were going to give me electric shock therapy." She had it 13 times during her four-month stay, against her wishes. "I thought I was being punished for something. The side-effects were horrible — my memory was gone and I had constant earache and headache. They treat animals better than that."

Franklin tried to discharge herself but was warned by staff that her daughter might be taken into care if she did. Brown, too, was desperate to leave, but "scared to go in case I wasn't given any more help."

Both women admit they needed clinical treatment initially, but feel damaged by their long hospital admissions. "Support from family and friends is more important," Franklin says.

Although the Government has recently branded care in the community a failure, Oates believes that, for PND sufferers, it is the best treatment. "As long as the mother is safe, there is no reason why she should not be treated at home. Hospital stays are always disruptive."

Brown knows this only too well. "My son was a toddler and he hated visiting me," she explains. "All of a sudden his mummy was gone and I think we are still paying for that. *Even now he asks me every day if we* can throw Alice in the bin."

In 1984, Oates initiated a scheme to care for PND sufferers in the community. Her Nottingham-based motherhood and mental health team deliver 24-hour specialist care into women's homes and run an early screening programme to target women at risk. The scheme works and a handful more have opened, but resources are low and PND is not a priority in the new Department of Health spending round on mental health. In the meantime, families like Brown's and Franklin's continue to have their needs ignored.